

WILD WEST



WEEKLY

A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG WILD WEST AND NEVADA NAN; OR THE WILD GIRL OF THE SIERRAS.

By AN OLD SCOUT.



"Do you see that hole?" shrieked the wild girl, pointing to the mouth of the pit. "That's where you will go for daring to interfere with Nevada Nan!" The giant negroes stood like statues and the cats purred in unison.



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Young Wild West and Nevada Nan

—OR—

THE WILD GIRL OF THE SIERRAS

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CHAPTER I.

AN INTERESTING GAME.

"My friend, will you have a game of cards with us to pass away the time?"

"Well, I don't know. I suppose I might. I am not much of a card player, but it will be a relief to the monotony of this journey for me to get my mind on some sort of game. It is a mighty long distance from Denver to Carson City, it seems to me."

"Well, it is rather long. But, you see, the changing and waiting for trains is what makes it appear longer. Sit right down, sir, and we will have a three-handed game of euchre, or seven-up, just as you say, to pass the time away."

"Oh, I understand one game as well as another, so it makes little difference to me which one we play."

The conversation took place on a railroad train that was rather slowly winding up the mountains in the western part of Nevada, one night in spring a few years ago.

The scene was in the smoking car of the train.

There were not more than a dozen passengers in the car at the time, and two of them had turned a seat over right under the lamp that was in the center of the car.

The two were no doubt men who had either been reared in the far West, or had lived there long enough to become accustomed and adapted to it.

They were attired in a manner that suggested a dashy and sporty appearance, while at the same time there was an air of roughness about them that gave them the tone of miners or prospectors.

One of the pair had spoken the words at the opening of our story, and had addressed them to a well-dressed man of forty, whose general appearance told quite plainly that he was a stranger to the West.

But he had accepted the invitation to play a game of cards, just to pass away the time, and when he sat down, and the little square table-top that had been furnished the two men by the train boy was placed on their knees, the two Westerners cast meaning glances at each other.

"Let me see," said the one who had suggested the game, "it will be at least four hours before the train gets in at Silver City. Suppose we make the game draw poker, instead of euchre or seven-up? We can play for very small stakes, and that will lend just enough excitement to the game to make it interesting. What do you say, my friend?"

"That will suit me," was the reply from the tenderfoot. "I don't understand draw poker any better than I do the other game, but I know what a pair is, and if I should get a flush I would be likely to notice it after I had looked at the cards. I am very anxious to get to Carson City, and

the more I think about it the slower the train seems to go. It will be worth a hundred dollars to me to get my mind on something else. Let's cut for deal."

Again the two men looked at each other.

It was evident that they were just the least bit puzzled at the way the man from the East talked.

It was hard for them to tell whether he was as innocent as he appeared, or whether he was a professional gambler, meeting them half-way and going them one better.

They were card sharps, and they had simply invited the stranger into the game to fleece him out of some of his money.

But they concluded to try him, anyhow, and as it was two against one, they figured that they would be bound to come out ahead, even if he was more than they had taken him to be.

"My name is Spencer Payton, and I am from Philadelphia," remarked the stranger, as he cut the cards to see who would deal.

"Mine's Jerry Wall," said the man who had been doing the talking, "and this is my friend, Peter Dougherty. We are in ther minin' business not far from Carson City."

"Oh, I am glad of that! I am glad to meet some person who is acquainted with the place I am bound for. I hope that we will see considerable of each other before I leave Silver City. There! It is your deal, Mr. Wall. Now I will try and get my wits about me and play the game right. If I do make any mistakes, I suppose I will be the one to suffer, though. What shall the ante be?"

"Suit yourself," was the reply.

"Well, I never did believe in gambling, but in this case it won't make much difference, because we are doing it more to pass away the time than anything else. Suppose we start it off at a quarter of a dollar and make the limit five dollars? I don't know whether that would be in order or not, because I never saw it played just that way."

"That'll do all right," spoke up Peter Dougherty. "That will make it interestin' enough to start with, anyhow."

"Right you are, Pete!" exclaimed Jerry Wall. "It's your ante, Mr. Payton."

"Oh, that's so!" was the quick retort. "You will have to excuse me for such blunders. I never played the game enough to get quite used to it. I was not trying to evade the putting up of the quarter, gentlemen—not by any means."

"No, of course not. Well, now I will deal the cards around."

The cards were dealt, and Spencer Payton sat looking at his hand as though he was just the least bit puzzled.

"Let me see," he said. "What do I do now?"

"You have the privilege of discarding any or all of your cards and taking others in their place," replied Wall.

"Oh, give me three cards, then."

They were given him, and then Dougherty drew a like number, while the dealer drew four.

"I is your bet, Pete," said Wall.

"All right. I'll go the limit, then, just for the fun of it. I drew a putty good hand."

He laid down five dollars.

"Well, I drew a pretty good hand myself, so I'll raise it five."

The man from Philadelphia hesitated a moment and looked at his cards, as though he hardly knew what his hand was worth.

"Well," said he, after a short pause, "I suppose I have a chance to win. I'll make it five better. How much do I have to put down now?"

"Fifteen dollars," answered Wall, looking at him keenly.

But there was nothing but innocence depicted upon the face of Spencer Payton, as he took the three bills from a roll and laid them down.

Dougherty promptly raised it another five, and his partner boosted it right along.

"Let me see," said Payton, half to himself, "what beats a flush?"

"A full hand," retorted Dougherty.

"And a full hand is three of one kind and two of another, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, I guess I had better meet your bets then, and call you. I have got a full hand."

He put down ten dollars and then turned his cards face up on the board.

The two gamblers looked very much surprised when they saw the cards.

"Why, that isn't a full hand!" exclaimed Jerry Wall.

"There isn't a pair in it! You have got three diamonds and two clubs, but none of them will mate."

"Isn't that what you call a full hand?" questioned Payton, in astonishment. "There's three of one suit, and two of another."

"I know. But you must have three aces and some other pair, or any three and another paid. It isn't ther suit that counts in a full hand, you know. It counts in a flush, but that's all."

"Oh, well, please excuse my ignorance, gentlemen. I will pay for learning. Who wins the money, then?"

"I do!" spoke up Dougherty. "I've got three aces!"

"That's right!" chimed in Wall. "I have got three trays."

"Three-spots, you mean," corrected the Philadelphian.

"We call them trays."

"Oh!"

"And the two-spots are deuces."

"I see. I have never played but little with a whole pack, you see."

The gamblers began to think that they had caught one of the easiest victims they had run upon in a long time.

Here was a man who was perfectly willing to play for money, and yet he did not know what a full hand was, or was not aware that certain cards in the pack were called trays and deuces.

They figured on cleaning him out before the train got to Silver City.

Payton shuffled and dealt the cards this time, forgetting to offer them to Dougherty to cut.

But they thought this was simply his ignorance of the game, and neither of them said anything.

"Whose come-up is it now?" he asked, after he had managed to give them each five cards and a like number for himself.

"Mine," said Dougherty, and he promptly laid five dollars on the board.

"You are putting down the limit," remarked the Philadelphian.

"That's so, but suppose we quit limitin' it this hand, jest fur ther fun of it?"

"I'm agreeable. Any way suits me. I have only so much money to lose in the game, anyway."

"Well, I don't believe in making the bets too high," observed Wall, holding his hand dubiously.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Payton. "We are not trying to rob each other. If you don't get a hand that's worth betting on, don't bet."

"Well, all right. I'll take two cards, then, as soon as you have given me, friend hi."

"Give me two," said Dougherty, throwing that many on the board.

Payton did so.

"Now my two."

He dealt out two more.

Then he laid down the pack and began to study the card he had in his hand.

"Five cards of one suit is called a flush, isn't it?" he questioned.

"Yes," answered the gamblers, in a breath.

"Well, I guess I'll take only one card this time, then."

He took the card, and then the game proceeded.

The two rascals had decided to "pick" him this hand, thinking that he might tire of the game and quit before they got all he had.

Dougherty had stolen four five-spots from the pack, and Wall had managed to obtain four deuces.

Dougherty was to win, and then, after the game was over, they would divide the spoils.

Wall bet fifty dollars, and his partner doubled the amount.

The Philadelphian hesitated, and then raised it to five hundred.

The game was getting to be interesting.

It was just at this moment that three passengers came in the smoker and lighted cigars.

They were dashing fellows, too, and quite striking in appearance.

Two of them were not much more than boys, as they had not yet reached the age of twenty-one, and the other was a tall, handsome man, of perhaps thirty, with a heavy, dark mustache and long black hair.

One of the boys wore a wealth of chestnut hair hanging down over his shoulders, and in form and features looked to be a veritable Apollo.

The other was quite handsome, too, and had his hair cut rather short.

All three of the newcomers were attired in handsome hunting suits of buckskin trimmed with red silk fringe, and were armed in the regular fashion of men in that part of the country.

They were typical Westerners; anyone could have seen that at the first glance.

Some of the other passengers in the car had moved up a little closer to the players to watch the game of draw poker, so the trio moved up that way, too.

It was just as the Philadelphian raised the bet to five hundred that they came up and stood in the aisle of the car, holding on to the seats.

After making the bet Payton shoved his cards together and held them in his hands, so no one could look at his hand from over his shoulders.

He did not seem to mind the spectators in the least, but Wall and Dougherty were evidently annoyed.

However, they said nothing, and went right ahead to fleece the tenderfoot.

"You must have a putty good hand, I reckon," observed Dougherty. "You're sure you ain't made no mistake, like you did ther last time, ain't you?"

"Oh, I guess I haven't made any mistake this time," was the reply. "I haven't got a full hand this time."

"Well, I'm jest goin' to see you that five hundred, an' go you five better."

"An' I'm goin' right along with you!" exclaimed Wall.

He laid down a thousand dollars, and then placed a five-hundred-dollar bill on top of it.

"Something tells me that I've got the winning hand," said the Philadelphian, drawing out a fat-looking wallet. "We are all friends, I guess, and it won't make nuch difference who wins. Here goes a thousand better."

A deep hush came over the lookers-on.

Every man in the smoker was now on his feet, watching the game.

Dougherty cast a swift glance at his confederate, and then met the bet and raised it.

He was certain that the Philadelphian had a flush.

And what good would that be against his four of a kind?"

Wall lifted it up five hundred, and then it came the tenderfoot's turn again.

"Let me see," he observed, looking at the two gamblers. "What did you say a flush beat?"

"Three of a kind," was the quick reply.

"And what beats a flush?"

"A full hand."

"And what beats that?"

"Four of a kind."

"Well, can't four of a kind be beaten?"

"Yes, a royal flush will beat four of a kind, providing you are lucky enough to git one," and Wall smiled.

"Let me see. A royal flush is—"

"Cards of the same suit from ace down."

"Oh! Well, then, I am going to raise this thing to just five thousand dollars. I feel it in my bones I am going to win this hand."

The two gamblers looked at each other in dismay.

They felt that there was a royal flush against them, and that meant that they had lost.

Dougherty hesitated, and then, turning to his partner, said:

"I am out!"

"So am I!" exclaimed Wall, throwing down his hand.

"Then the money is all mine," remarked Payton, looking at them in innocent surprise. "Well, that's funny! I didn't have a pair in my hand!" and he raked in the money with great quickness.

CHAPTER II.

YOUNG WILD WEST AND HIS TWO PARTNERS.

As the Philadelphian threw down his hand, face up, and the gamblers saw that he had told the truth, he arose from his seat, a bland smile playing about his features.

"Much obliged to you for entertaining me, gentlemen," he said. "I did remarkably well for a green horn, did I not?"

"See here!" said Jerry Wall, springing to his feet and pulling out a revolver. "You're a thief! You've stolen our money from us, an' if you don't hand every cent of it back I'll bore you full of holes!"

"No, you won't, my friend! Just put up that shooter—quick, now."

It was the dashing looking boy with the long hair who uttered the ringing words.

Wall had been in the act of leveling his weapon at Spencer Payton, but when he saw the muzzle of a nickel-plated six-shooter staring him directly in the face, he changed his mind.

"Who—what do you mean by interfering with us, young feller?" he blurted out.

"Oh, I only want to see fair play, that's all," was the rejoinder. "When I saw you two fellows get on the train this afternoon I put you down as a couple of card sharps. Now, since someone has beaten you at your own game, you threaten to make lead fly in the car. Just take my advice, now, and keep cool. This man won your money square enough. He bluffed you to a standstill. I don't believe in gambling myself, but I do believe in fair play at anything."

There was such a cool and easy way about the boy that the passengers looked at him in dumbfounded admiration.

"Who are you, anyway?" Pete Dougherty asked, after a rather lengthy pause, during which his partner had taken his seat.

"Who am I? Well, if it will do you any good to know, I will tell you. I am Young Wild West."

There was a silence of perhaps half a minute, and then one of the passengers broke into a cheer.

He was quickly joined by nearly all the rest, and the car fairly rang with their shouts.

"What's all this yelling about?" demanded a brakeman, stepping in. "There's a sick woman in the next car, and you people have got to be a little bit quiet."

"A sick woman in that car, did you say?" asked the boy who had given out his name as Young Wild West, pointing to the car the trainman had indicated.

"Yes," was the gruff reply. "If you fellers want to drink a lot of whisky an' git drunk, you've got to shut up that."

"See here, my friend, how long has the woman been sick?"

"None of your business," was the quick reply.

"Oh, well, just allow me to tell you that I came out of that car less than five minutes ago, and there was no lady there then. I hope you are interested in these two gamblers here. Probably they are going to give you a good share of the money they made on the train."

The boy turned toward him menacingly.

But he had not got before he was within reach of him, saying:

"I noticed that you was pretty handy with that shooter of yours, young feller. That's a way people like you have."

You couldn't scare a mouse if it wasn't that you knew how to shoot putty quick."

"Oh, I wouldn't bother shooting at such fellers as you are," was the reply. "If I had sufficient cause I would throw you over a seat and spank you. You are not running this car, and the best thing you can do is to get back where you belong and stay there until someone calls on you."

This remark so enraged the brakeman that he darted forward and made a grab at the boy.

But Young Wild West simply jumped out of his way, and allowed him to go crashing into a seat.

Jerry Wall and Pete Dougherty both made a move to get up just then, but the tall man who was with Young Wild West whipped out a revolver, and exclaimed:

"Sit still, you measly coyotes! If you git up me an' Jim Dart will throw you out of the window."

They dropped back on the seat.

The brakeman got up, however, and made another rush for the daring boy with the flowing chestnut hair.

Biff!

He received a blow in the mouth that sent him staggering back.

Then Young Wild West grabbed him by the legs and turned him over the back of a seat as though he was a sack of potatoes.

He gave him one slap on the back of the neck to let him know that he meant business, and then he proceeded to give him a regular old-fashioned spanking.

He held him right in position until he got through with him, too.

"Now, then, get back where you belong!" he said, giving him a quick shove. "You can report this to the conductor, if you like."

The train hand fell on his stomach in the aisle, and a roar of laughter went up from the passengers.

Before he could get up of his own accord Young Wild West took him by the collar and yanked him to his feet.

Then he used his toe on him and sent him flying toward the end of the car.

That settled the brakeman, for the time being, anyhow.

He went out of the car and remained on the platform.

When the excitement had subsided Spencer Payton turned to Young Wild West and said:

"I am very much obliged to you. You see, I am not much used to the ways of people in this part of the country. I never dreamed of such a thing as being made the target of a revolver. I have heard and read a great deal of such things happening in the West, but I never gave them any credence. Those two men laid a plot to fleece me out of my money, and, knowing it, I worked a plan to get the better of them. I am no gambler, though I will admit that I know more about cards than I led them to believe. It struck me to bluff them, and I did so. Then, because I got the best of them, that man was going to make me give the money back, or else get shot."

"I understood the whole thing the instant I came in," was the reply. "Well, I guess you have taught them a lesson. They will be pretty careful the next time they try to fleece a strange, most likely."

Payton told him who he was, and then Young Wild West introduced his two companions as Cheyenne Charlie, the famous scout, and Jim Dart, his boy chum.

"We are on the way to the Sierra range on a little business," he said. "We have got our horses in a box car on the train. It cost considerable to fetch them by the same train, but we managed it all right. I guess that brakeman was not aware that we had made arrangements with one of the head officials of the road which gives us all sorts of privileges that an ordinary passenger does not get. Of course we are not supposed to do anything that would annoy any of the passengers, though. The fact is, the brakeman is a friend of these two fellows, and he wanted to take it up for them."

The boy nodded to the gamblers as he spoke.

"Well, I reckon ther measly coyotes are satisfied," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "They will have to make up for what they lost on the next greenhorn they come across."

"That's what's the matter, Charlie!" exclaimed Jim Dart. "They struck the wrong man when they bucked up against the man from Philadelphia."

The gamblers said not a word.

But it was quite evident that they were anything but satisfied over the way things had turned out.

Young Wild West and his two partners were going to the Sierra range on a rather peculiar mission.

They had learned a few weeks before from an Indian that there was a certain spot on the range that contained many curious things, among which was the exact figure of a monster panther in a crouching attitude, that was made of stone.

As the Indian had told them this with his dying breath, and had also given them a chart of the place and the way to get there, our three friends had decided to make the journey to the Sierras and hunt for the stone panther.

Young Wild West declared that if there was such odd things as monster stone panthers there, something far more wonderful and valuable would be found there, too.

He was thinking of the Aztecs.

That race had lived there ages before, and the ruins of their cities had been found in several parts of the Sierra Madre range.

Young Wild West loved adventure above all other things.

He was never satisfied unless he was running into some kind of danger, but he was always on the lookout for a fellow being in distress.

Wild loved to be on hand to champion the case of anyone who was in the right, and the evil-doers who knew him were afraid of him.

And Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were so near like the boy in disposition that the three got along as well as brothers could have done.

It was a long journey from Dakota to California, so they had shipped their horses in a box car in charge of a trusted friend named Lively Rick, and had set out to hunt for the stone panther.

Nothing worthy of recording had taken place on the journey until the little trouble with the gamblers and the brakemen occurred.

And even that was of such small importance that Young Wild West did not mind it in the least.

Carson City was rather a small place at the time of which we write.

But it was a lively one, for all that.

Situated on the line of the railway, and being the center for a rich mining district, it gave promise of becoming one of the greatest cities of the West.

But things do not turn out always as indications point.

There were so many cities to spring up later on that Carson was kept back in line with them.

It was nearly eleven o'clock at night when the train pulled into the town and our friends got off.

The box car containing their horses was switched off on a siding and then they went to the nearest hotel.

The air was very bracing in that high altitude, but they were well used to it.

With Spencer Payton it was different.

He had been talking of the change in the atmosphere more than an hour before their arrival.

He could notice it, having always lived in a lower altitude.

But when he got up the next morning he declared that he had never felt so well in his life.

"Good-morning, gentlemen!" he exclaimed, when he met Young Wild West and his two partners. "Which way now?"

"To the depot to look after our horses," replied our hero.

"So you brought your horses with you, then?"

"Oh, yes; we are going to ride considerable through this part of the country."

"May I ask if you are bound for any particular place?"

"Well, we are going over the California line and take a little trip around through the Sierra range."

"Is that so?" and Payton looked interested. "Why, that is about the place I want to go. I don't mind telling you what I am going there for, either. I have a brother—or did have when I heard from him about a year ago—living somewhere in the mountains in the section of which you speak. He has been there for many years, living the life of a recluse. I have long wanted to come out here and hunt him up, but never could afford it until now. A rich aunt died and left a fortune, which is to be equally divided between my brother and myself, if I can find him. If I cannot find him, or he does not show up in six months from the time the will is read, I get the whole fortune. But I don't want only half of it. There is enough for both of us, and I want to find John Payton."

"I see," said Young Wild West, becoming interested. "You have quite a job ahead of you to find your brother, Mr. Payton. Unless you know just about where he was last

known to be living, it will be a case of good luck, more than anything else, if you find him."

"The only trace I have to work on is that the last letter I received from him is dated Carson City. That is why I came here first. But he told me in the letter that he was living in California, not far from the Nevada line, and that no one could ever find him."

"What made him git off in such a hidin' place, anyhow?" asked Cheyenne Charlie, who generally spoke just the way he thought.

The Philadelphian's face flushed slightly.

"It was all a mistake," he answered. "My brother John was arrested for a crime he never committed. He escaped from the jail and fled to California. That was the last we heard of him until a little over a year ago. Then I answered his letter and informed him that his innocence had been established long ago and urged him to come back home. He answered my letter, declaring that it was too late for him to come back now, as he had become so used to the wild life in the fastness of the mountains that he could never content himself anywhere else. He stated that he had been married, but was then a widower and had a daughter aged sixteen years, who had been born and reared in the mountains. The girl, he said, would die if she were taken away from her wild haunts, as she was not like other girls. She knew not what civilization was like. A rather queer story I am telling you, Young Wild West, but I like you, and that is why I have made you and your friends my confidants."

"Well, Mr. Payton, we will try and help you find your brother."

CHAPTER III.

PAYTON BUYS A HORSE.

The man from Philadelphia looked at Young Wild West as though he could hardly believe his senses.

"You will help me find my brother?" he echoed.

"Yes, we have a little business up in the mountains, as I said before. You are welcome to join our party, if you like, and we will do all we can to hunt for the lost brother and his daughter."

"Thank you!" cried Payton. "I will be very grateful to you if you will help me. I have been in a state of uneasiness ever since I started West. The only time I was in anything like my old form was when I was playing cards with the sharps on the train. I got so interested in trying to fool them and beat them at their own game, that for the time being I forgot all about my mission out here. I told them it would be worth a hundred dollars to me to pass the time in some kind of enjoyment, and I would have been willing to have paid it, too."

"But instead of payin' it you made a good pile yourself," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie.

"Yes, that's so. But I have plenty of money without that. I think I shall give the rascals a chance to win what they lost back the first time I meet them. They told me that they live in this town."

"Well, if you give them that chance be sure that you don't let them win any more than what they lost," said Jim Dart. "They will play for all they know how the next time, no doubt. Unless you are an expert you can never beat them again."

"Well, I am not an expert," and Payton smiled when he thought of how he had deluded the two rascals, and how astonished and enraged they were when they found he did not have a pair in his hand.

He walked over to the spot with them, and our three friends found him to be a very nice sort of a man.

When they got to the box car they found a man leading out a handsome sorrel stallion.

"That is my horse, Spitfire," said Wild to Payton. "What do you think of him?"

"My!" exclaimed the Philadelphian. "I never saw such a fine looking animal in my life! Isn't he a rather dangerous fellow?"

"Oh, no! He is just as tame as a kitten. Come here, Spitfire, old boy."

As our hero called out the intelligent animal pricked up his ears.

Then the man who had just placed the bridle on him let him go, and he came trotting over.

He came right up to his master, too, and when Wild patted him on the nose and petted him he let out a low whinny of pleasure.

"I believe you," was the reply.

The four now walked over to where the man was cleaning and bridling the rest of the horses.

"Hello, Rick!" said our hero. "How did you sleep last night?"

"Snug as a bug in a rug," was the reply. "Oh, I had a fine berth in ther ear with ther horses."

This is Lively Rick from Devil Creek, Mr. Payton. He is a well-to-do niiner, but he wanted to come with us on this trip so badly that he coaxed me to allow him to come along in the car with the horses, so they would have the best of care on the journey."

"Lively Rick from Devil Creek, eh?" retorted Payton. "Well, that is a sort of rhyme, I guess. But, anyhow, I'm glad to meet the gentleman."

"Shake!" cried the man from Devil Creek, and then he gave the tenderfoot such a squeeze that he made him wince.

"You have got a pretty hearty grip, my friend," said Payton.

"Think so? Well, that ain't nothin' to what Young Wild West kin give yer if he wants to. He kin make me git right down on my knees and holler like a stuck pig."

"I don't doubt that, when I come to think of how he handled a brakeman on the train last night," replied the Philadelphian.

"What was ther matter, Wild? Was yer teachin' some one how to behave?" and Lively Rick looked at the handsome boy who bore the nicknames of the Prince of the Saddle and Champion Deadshot of the West.

"Yes, there was a little trouble, Rick," was the reply; but it didn't amount to much.

"Tell me all about it, won't yer?"

Cheyenne Charlie then spoke up and related what had occurred on the train.

"Gamblers, hey?" said Lively Rick. "An' they got bluffed, did they? Well, I'm mighty glad of that, 'cause I've lost considerable dust foolin' with them kind of fellers."

The four horses that had been brought in the box car were soon ready to be led over to the hotel, and when they got there they were comfortably installed in the stable.

"I suppose I will have to get a horse," said Payton. "I am not much of a judge of them, either, and a very poor rider, I fear."

"Well, as far as judging a horse is concerned, we will do that for you," replied Wild. "And as to riding, you'll soon learn that, all right."

They had breakfast when they got back to the hotel, and then they all went out together to buy a horse for Payton.

There were plenty for sale in town, as they found by inquiry, and in a few minutes they were standing in the stable-yard of a dealer.

"Which of yer is it that wants ther horse?" asked the man in charge, when Wild told them their business there.

"I am the man who is going to ride the horse," said Payton.

"Oh, well, I reckon I've jest got ther critter you want, then. Tem, jest fetch out that roan."

A couple of minutes later a stable boy appeared with a vicious-looking cayuse that appeared to be about as obstinate as a mule.

"We don't want that one," said Wild, quietly. "Fetch out a good horse."

"Say!" answered the man, flashing an angry look at our hero. "I thought this was ther gent that wanted to buy ther horse."

"So he is, but I'm with him to see that he gets a horse that will suit him."

"How do you know what kind of a critter will suit him? If you was goin' to buy one you wouldn't let some one tell you what to buy, would you?"

"No, I would not. I would do my own selecting in a case of that kind. But in this case it is different. This gentleman has left it to me to pick out a horse for him, so if you think that you have anything that will suit me, you will probably make a mule. That roan is no animal for a tenderfoot to tackle, and you know it. You simply thought that you could get clear of it and get a good price at the same time."

"That is a young fellow! Ther roan is a good true hoss, an' ain't nothin' else."

Young Wild West did not like being told that he lied. But he kept his temper, for all that.

"Can you ride the roan?" he asked, speaking as coolly as though he was simply looking for a little information.

"Me ride ther roan? Why, of course."

"Let us see you."

"Not by a jugful!"

"You can't ride him!"

"I kin!"

"See here, now. You told me that I lied a minute ago; now, unless you ride that horse I will put you down as a liar!"

"What!"

The horse dealer looked at him as though he could scarcely believe his senses.

"Didn't I speak plainly enough?"

"Well, I reckon I heard what yer said, but ther thing is, did yer mean it?"

"I certainly did."

"Then I'll have to chastise you, youngster."

"You'd better not try it."

"You are about ther sassiest youngster I ever came across."

"Never mind about that. Look out, now! Don't come too near me."

The man was walking toward him now, and there was blood in his eye, to use the term.

Evidently he had an idea that Wild was going to run away from him, and he wanted to get hold of him in the worst way.

"If you try to lay hands on me I'll throw you down so hard that it might hurt you," said Wild, calmly.

"You will, hey?" and with that the horse dealer made a grab for him.

Then Wild caught him just as he wanted to, and up went his heels, and down he came with a thud upon the ground.

"I told you I would throw you down," he said. "Now, ain't you sorry you tackled me?"

"Wough!" grunted the surprised man.

"Shall I help you up?" and Wild put out his hand.

Rather to his surprise, the horse dealer took it.

"Thank you," he said, as he got upon his feet. "We'll call it quits, my boy. It jest struck me who you was. You're Young Wild West, ain't yer?"

"Yes, that happens to be my name."

"I thought so. I wish I had thought so before I tackled you, though."

"Well, I guess I didn't hurt you any."

"Not much," retorted the man, brushing his clothes rather sheepishly. "Two friends of mine told me about you last night. That's how I come to know you. You sorter handled a brakeman on ther train last night, didn't yer?"

"Oh, I simply taught him to mind his own business."

"So I heard. My two friends happened to be on ther train, an' they told me about it."

"Well, never mind about that now. Have you got a good horse to sell?"

"Yes, I've got jest what you want."

"Fetch him out and we'll have a look at him," said Wild.

The stable boy had been gaping in amazement at what was taking place, but he now hurried to get the horse, taking the roan plug back with him.

The horse proved to be the one that our hero thought was suitable for Payton, so he advised him to buy it.

The Philadelphian did so, paying just what was asked for it.

"You kin git a good saddle and other trappin's down to ther corner," remarked the dealer. "I'm interested in ther store there, so you might as well throw a little my way as to give it to some one else, especially as you kin do jest as good, both in price an' quality."

They went to the place indicated, and Payton bought a complete outfit.

Then they were all ready to start out on their search through the Sierras.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE MOUNTAINS.

"You haven't told me what your mission to the Sierras is, Mr. West," said Spencer Payton, as they were seated at the table after eating dinner at the hotel.

"Oh, we are hunting up a little adventure, principally," replied Wild. "But we have an idea of finding some ancient ruins, too."

"Ancient ruins, eh?"

"Yes, I will show you a chart and tell you all I know about it, since we are to travel together."

He did so, and found Payton eager to be one of the party to hunt up the stone panther.

"We can work together," he said. "I am always interested in unearthing strange things, and I will stick to you until you accomplish your purpose, even if I find my brother at the first go-off."

"Well, I don't see as there is anything to keep us around here any longer," remarked Wild, after a pause. "We can start this afternoon just as well as not."

"Suppose we do, then?" and the Philadelphian showed how eager he was to go.

Of course, Cheyenne Charlie, Jim Dart and Lively were willing.

Wild wished to stock up with a few cigars. Charlie and Lively Rick said that they wanted some tobacco and a little brandy to take with them, and Spencer Payton insisted on paying for it all, so they went into the barroom before they got their horses out.

When they walked in they found the man they had purchased the horse of there at the bar with two men whom they had seen before.

The two were Jerry Wall and Pete Dougherty, the gamblers.

They looked up when our friends entered, but said nothing.

The horse dealer smiled rather faintly, though, and saluted them with a "Howdy do?"

"You found ther horse all right, I reckon, didn't yer?" he added, turning to the Philadelphian.

"Well, I haven't mounted him yet," was the reply. "But I guess it is all right. Young Wild West says he is, anyhow."

Jerry Wall uttered something of a sneer then, but our hero did not appear to notice it.

He could easily tell that the rascally pair had it in for him, though.

They ordered what they wanted of the man in charge of the place, and then, just as they were turning to go out, Wall called out:

"Say, Payton, ain't you goin' to give me a chance to git hunk with yer for what yer done last night?"

"Well," replied Payton, "I was just going to leave town, but if you can suggest a quick game I will give you a chance. I am satisfied that you fellows don't know how to play draw poker. If you did, you wouldn't have allowed me to win your money."

"That's all right; you took about four thousand dollars from the pair of us last night. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll cut the cards with you five times for a thousand dollars each shot."

"Just five times and no more?"

"Yes."

"All right. That will give you a chance to get your money back, and some more besides. I am not crazy over gambling, for I don't believe money obtained that way ever does a man any good. Get a new deck of cards and let Young Wild West shuffle them, and then we will cut."

The rascals did not just like this idea, but they did not back down.

The proprietor handed over a new deck of cards to Wild, and he shuffled them carefully.

The inmates of the room crowded up to witness the proceedings as he placed the pack on the bar between the two men.

This was what the miners called fair and square gambling.

"Aee is high, gentlemen," said our hero. "Go ahead and cut the cards."

Payton was first to obey.

He turned up the king of spades.

"That's pretty good," said Wall, and then he turned over the ace of hearts.

"You win," said the Philadelphian, handing over the money, which he had divided into five parts, so as to have a thousand dollars to hand out each time if was necessary.

The truth was that he wanted the men to get their money back.

He felt that the money was not his by right, anyhow.

Young Wild West shuffled the cards again, and they cut them.

Wall won again.

"I am in luck, I guess," he remarked, smiling with great satisfaction.

He won the third time, and the Philadelphian ~~was~~ a well pleased over it as he did.

His luck stuck to him the fourth time, for, though Payton cut a queen, he turned up a king.

"Now for the last time," said Payton. "Win or lose, I won't gamble any more after this turn of the card."

He turned the ace of hearts.

"I guess the luck has turned your way," the gambler remarked, and then he cut and turned up the ace of spades.

"A tie!" exclaimed Young Wild West. "Cut over again!"

"Well, I suppose I will have to," said Payton, "but when this is settled it will be the last thing in the gambling line I will ever do."

"You mean for to-day," spoke up the horse dealer.

"No, I mean for all time. I will quit gambling forever," retorted the Philadelphian.

He cut and turned the king of clubs.

Wall reached over and got the deuce of the same suit.

"That settles it!" exclaimed Young Wild West.

"Well, I am still ahead," remarked Payton. "Now, then, landlord, if you will name some family worthy of what I have over and above what I had before I first gambled with these men, I will give it to them. I am done gambling forever, as I said a little while ago."

"Well, I might find some family what needed ther money," retorted the landlord, scratching his head, thoughtfully.

"Do so, then."

A family was named that seemed to fit the ideas of all those who were residents of the town in the barroom.

Payton handed the money to the landlord, and then, with a pleasant good-day to everybody, started for the door.

"Hold on, my friend," spoke up Wall. "That is kinder a bad way ter go out. You ought to be able to treat the boys."

"I might be able, but I am not just in the humor now," was the retort. "I know when it is my turn, without being told. I believe I paid for the last round, as it is."

"That's right!" spoke up the landlord.

Wall made some sneering remarks which our friends could not understand.

"See here, you measly coyote!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, turning around. "You act as though you were lookin' for a muss. Are you, or ain't you?"

"I don't know as any one said anything to you," was the quick reply.

"No, but I'm sayin' somethin' to you now!"

"Gentlemen," and Wall turned appealingly to the crowd in the place, "do you call this a square deal? Have I said anything to this man that he should try to get me to show fight, so he kin shoot me? I was talkin' to ther man I was gamblin' with, an' him alone."

There was no reply from the men in the barroom.

It looked as though they did not want to take sides.

But Cheyenne Charlie knew that the rascal had slurred them, and he was not going to let it pass unnoticed.

He was getting madder all the time, too.

Suddenly he whipped out his shooter, and, in a loud voice, exclaimed:

"Git outside, you measly coyote! Hurry up, or I'll fill you full of holes."

Jerry Wall cast a swift glance about the room, as though looking for some one to help him.

But no one offered to do so.

That meant that he must obey the command given him.

He stepped out with great alacrity, and the scout followed him.

Then Cheyenne Charlie ordered him to dance, and he kept sending bullets so close to the rascally gambler's heels that the dance was more of a Highland Fling than anything else.

"Now, maybe you'll know enough to keep your mouth shut and not slur people," said Charlie, when it was over. "Git back in the barroom, you measly coyote. An' if you don't set 'em up for the crowd now, you're a very unthankful galoot. 'Cause if I'd only took a notion I'd have made a sand-sifter out of yer head."

Wall lost no time in getting inside the hotel. Though he was a handy man with a revolver, he saw that he was no match for Cheyenne Charlie.

"I hope you are all satisfied, gentlemen," observed Young Wild West. "If you are, we will bid you good-day."

"Good-day," answered several of the men.

Then one of them cried out:

"Three cheers for Young Wild West and his partners boys!"

"It seemed as though every one within hearing joined in the cheering, but, of course, the gamblers did not.

And the horse dealer, who was plainly their warm friend, remained silent also.

As they had settled up with the hotel proprietor and made all the purchases they wanted to, our friends got their horses out from the stable and started to leave town.

Wild headed in a southwesterly direction, for he had looked over the rude map the Indian had given him and found the direction to travel in order to reach the stone panther.

The country was very rough and uneven about that section.

Though the distance in a straight line to Sacramento was not over a hundred miles, a person, to reach there, would have to travel more than double that distance.

The trail our friends struck was a winding one that led through deep gorges, along the brinks of yawning chasms, up slippery ascents, and along treacherous ledges.

When night came, though they had covered fully thirty miles, they were not more than fifteen from Carson City.

But for the wildness and absolute loneliness of the scene they might just as well have been a thousand miles beyond the borders of civilization.

"This is the grandest sight I ever saw," said Spencer Payton, as he stood on a high bluff and gazed at the setting sun, as they came to a halt, after selecting a spot to camp. "Those jagged peaks with the snow on top of them and the green forests lying beneath them make a sublime light with the sun shining from between those two curiously shaped peaks over there."

"You are right," answered Young Wild West. "In my opinion, no prettier scenery can be found anywhere in the world than in the Sierra Madre range."

All hands took a look at the scene, even Cheyenne Charlie and Lively Rick getting interested for the space of a minute.

"It's a fine sight," said the scout, after a minute of silence. "But it would be a little better if a big bear was to show up right in that slantin' ray from ther settin' sun. Then we'd have somethin' to look at."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a supple form sprang across the very place he referred to and disappeared in the bushes.

But as quickly as it had been done, Young Wild West had recognized the form as that of a female.

It was a young girl, too, and she was attired in the costume of a mountain girl—or as one would apt to be attired.

"Thunder!" ejaculated Cheyenne Charlie. "That wasn't no bear."

"Not much!" exclaimed Jim Dart. "I hardly know what it was, but I would be willing to bet that it was a human being."

"That's right enough, Jim," spoke up our hero. "It's a human being, sure enough, and it's a young girl, too."

"I reckon you must have had a pretty good look at her to tell that," said Lively Rick. "I thought it was a bear first."

"Well, I did have a pretty good look. While you fellows are getting things in shape and the supper ready, I am going to see if I can find her."

"All right," answered Jim. "Go ahead; but don't stay long."

"Oh, I won't be gone more than half an hour at the most."

Rifle in hand, Young Wild West hastened for the spot where he had seen the girl disappear.

He was curious to meet her, because the sight of her had made him think of the story Payton had told about his brother.

This girl might be the Philadelphia niece.

The brief glance Wild had of her assured him that she was not used to civilization.

If she had she would not have darted away when she saw them looking at her as she crossed the ray of sunlight.

When Wild got to the place where she had darted into the bushes he found a path there.

He was not the least bit surprised, for he had figured on finding one.

With noiseless tread he followed the path, which led through a thick clump of fir trees.

CHAPTER V.

WILD IS CAPTURED BY THE WILD GIRL.

Wild followed the path along, and presently he found himself going down a light descent.

He was quite confident that the girl lived somewhere in the vicinity, and he expected to come upon a log cabin at any moment.

But before he had been following the path for five minutes he evidently heard the tread of horse, or mules, he could not tell which.

He stepped forward, and the next instant he was gazing upon another trail that led over the mountains.

And coming along it he saw two giant negroes riding miles and leading two more of the animals behind them, both of which were loaded with bags and packages.

There was nothing remarkable about this, only that the negroes were such big fellows, and Wild was going to push his way forward and meet them, when the form of a girl suddenly appeared on the scene.

It was the same one he had seen flitting across the ray of sunlight into the bushes, so he remained silent and waited to see what she would do.

"Where have you been so long?" she demanded, in a low, searching voice. "Don't you black fools know that Nevada Nan can't wait long when she wants anything? Jest wait till I get you home. Won't I lam ther gad into you fellows! I guess you have forgot that Nevada Nan is the Queen of the Sierras, even if she is a wild girl. Ha, ha, ha!"

The girl's voice sounded strange and unnatural as she broke into a laugh, and Young Wild West shrugged his shoulders.

"She's daffy," he thought. "I wonder where she lives, anyhow? And what is the matter with the two darkies—they haven't so much as made a reply to her. By Jove! They are either mutes, or they know when to answer and when not to. Ah, so Nevada Nan, as he calls herself, has a mount, has she?"

The wild girl had reached her hand into a clump of bushes, and when she pulled it back the hand held the bridle-rein of a horse, which came out into view and stood as meek as a lamb.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the girl, in a chilling, harsh way. "Now for home! Git a hustle on you, you black fools, or I'll whip you until ther blood runs down to your heels."

The negroes were watching every move she made, and when they saw her motion to go ahead they urged the mules forward, though not a sound came from their lips.

Wild thought a moment.

He did not know whether to hail the girl or not.

He was quite certain that he would not be received in a friendly manner.

But he concluded to try it, anyway.

"Excuse me," he cried out, at the same time stepping from the bushes, "may I ask where this trail leads to, miss?"

The girl turned in the saddle as quick as a flash.

"None of your business, you pruin' fool!" she answered. "Ha, ha! I'm Nevada Nan, the Wild Girl of the Sierras! I'm a regular wildcat when I get mad, too, and if you come too close to me I'll scratch your eyes out."

"Don't get excited, Nevada Nan. I'm not going to harm you. Listen, I want to talk to you."

"Catch him and hold him while I scratch his eyes out!" shrieked the girl, making some quick motions to the negroes.

Though it is doubtful if they could hear what she said, they understood the motions quite well.

They slid from the mules they were riding with remarkable quickness.

Then they lunged rather than sprang toward our hero.

But he stepped out of their way so easily that they looked in amazement.

Wild smiled at them, and then shook his head for them to let him be.

But they did not intend to do this.

They were going to follow the instructions of their mistress.

They made another grab for him, and just missed him.

Then our hero jerked out his revolvers and covered the pair.

"Call your darky servants off, Nevada Nan, or I'll shoot them dead in their tracks!" he cried.

But it was not necessary for her to call them.

The deaf mutes saw something in the boy's eyes that told them he meant business.

They backed slowly toward the mules they had dismounted from.

Suddenly the wild girl let out a shriek of defiance, and started her horse on a gallop over the rough mountain road.

The sun had gone under, and it was almost dark now, so the next moment she was lost in the gloom of the bushes.

The giant negroes quickly mounted the mules and rode away after her.

Wild ran up the path, and was just in time to hear some one coming.

The next moment Cheyenne Charlie and Spencer Payton burst into view.

"What's the matter, Wild? We thought we heard some crazy person yellin'," said the scout.

"It was Nevada Nan you heard," was the reply. Listen! You can hear them riding away now."

"Then!" echoed the Philadelphian, in surprise.

"Yes, the wild girl and her two deaf and dumb servants."

"Thunder!" exclaimed Charlie.

Wild quickly told them that he had just experienced.

They were both much astonished.

"I don't know as there is anything so very strange about it, though," said our hero. "The girl, who is a little bit daffy, lives somewhere on the mountain, and the two giant negroes are servants of her family, I suppose. We will follow the trail, and will come across a ranch, perhaps."

"That's so," nodded Payton. "Do you know, Wild, I've just thought that this wild girl might be my brother's daughter."

"Some such idea struck me when I first saw her," was the reply.

"Don't you think it would be a good idea to follow the trail after supper for a few miles? We might be able to strike just as good a place to camp overnight?"

"All right."

They hastened back to the camp, and found Jim Dart and Lively Rick in a state of great excitement.

When they heard all about the wild girl of the Sierras and her two giant black servants they could scarcely believe their senses.

But they were eager to start right on the trail, so they hurried the supper they had started to cook.

It was now quite dark, but our friends were not afraid of the risk of riding over the mountain trail in the gloom.

Nevada Nan had gone off at a gallop, and if she could go as fast as that, they could proceed a little slower.

Half an hour later they had finished their evening meal and were ready to start.

"The moon will be up in a few minutes," observed Payton. "Then we will have a chance to see where we are going better."

"That's right," answered Wild, who was leading the way along the path that led to the trail.

They soon reached the spot where he had met the girl and the giant blacks, and then they proceeded along at a faster gait.

Then for the next hour they rode along without seeing anything that looked like the residence of a human being or hearing a sound other than the cries of animals that were prowling about and the sooughing of the branches overhead.

"I guess we have gone past the residence of the Wild Girl of the Sierras," observed our hero, as he brought his horse to a halt. "It has been so dark in some places that we have been unable to distinguish objects. I hardly think it is advisable to go any farther. What do you say if we go into camp right here? It is as good a place as we will be apt to find. I think."

"That's what's the matter!" spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "I reckon we've been on a wild goose chase."

The rest were perfectly willing to give up the search for the night.

They had traveled a good ten miles since supper, and they were willing to take a rest till morning.

The air in the high altitude was rather chilly, so Lively Rick lost no time in gathering wood and dry twigs and starting a fire.

As soon as they had picked out a place to tether their horses the rest set about to gathering a lot of pine needles.

Heaps of these with a blanket thrown on top made an excellent couch, as they well knew.

They had just got everything fixed to their satisfaction, when suddenly a shrill, discordant cry rang out close at hand.

It was a cry such as would cause a cold chill to run down the spine of an ordinary individual, and as it ended in a long-drawn wail our friends looked at each other.

Young Wild West was the first to speak.

"The wild girl, I guess," said he.

"Oh," and a simultaneous sigh of relief went up from his companions.

"Stay right where you are, boys! I am going to find her."

Young Wild West set out in the direction the cry had come from without another word.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A weird laugh went up, and echoed among the surrounding rocks.

But Wild never stopped.

He was moving swiftly, but noiselessly, through the

shadows, so that his approach would not be known, until the person who had uttered the cry saw him later.

The burst of laughter signified that such was the case, but Wild did not stop.

If it was Nevada Nan, as he was quite certain, he was going to overtake her.

About fifty yards from the camp he suddenly came upon a beaten path.

Just as he struck it he heard footsteps ahead of him.

Wild's quick ears told him that someone was hastening away from him.

He started on a run.

In less than half a minute he found that he was gaining on the person.

Suddenly he came out into an open space where the moonlight shone in full force.

He was just in time to catch a glimpse of a female figure as it disappeared at the edge of the little clearing opposite.

Our hero unhesitatingly sped across the open space.

There was some sort of a mystery attached to the girl, he thought, and he was as anxious to solve it as quickly as possible.

It might be that she was the niece of Spencer Payton, and it might be that she was the daughter of some ranchman, who was so unfortunate as to have her mind affected.

Wild reached the edge of the cleared spot, and found that the path continued.

He ran faster now, and soon was able to catch a glimpse of a moving form ahead of him.

"Stop!" he called out in a firm, but gentle voice. "I would not harm you, Nevada Nan. I wish to speak to you."

"Ha, ha!" was the reply. "I don't know you! I don't know anybody! I'm the wild girl of the Sierras!"

She stopped still in her tracks, and then swung around facing our hero, who halted within six feet of her.

A gleam of moonlight shone full upon her face, and as Wild looked at her he noticed her eyes were blazing with an unnatural glare.

"Nevada Nan, I am looking for a man named John Payton. Can you tell me where I can find him?" Wild asked, gently.

The girl gave a start.

Then she placed her hand on her forehead, as though it hurt her, and said:

"Why do you interfere with me? It is death to all who interfere with me! Your doom is sealed for coming here. You have no right to come upon the Sierra Range, because it belongs to me. I am Nevada Nan, and I own all the land I can see with my eyes. You must die for interfering with me."

Then a hollow, mocking laugh came from her lips, and it had hardly died out when there was a commotion in the bushes on either side of Young Wild West.

His ever-ready revolver was in his hand instantly, but before he could locate where the danger lay two giant forms sprang upon him.

It is just possible that Wild might have escaped being caught by them, but a third appeared in time to knock his weapon from his grasp and forced him backward to the ground.

Then it was all up with him, as far as getting away from them was concerned.

He was but a child in the hands of these giants.

Not a sound came from the lips of either of them, nor did the wild girl speak, and in a couple of minutes he was bound hand and foot.

Then at a sign from the girl, one of them picked up the helpless form of Young Wild West and threw it over his shoulder.

Then, with Nevada Nan in the lead, they hurried through the darkness.

CHAPTER VI.

VILLAINS THREE.

We will now go back to Carson City and see what the two gamblers were up to.

Notwithstanding that they had got the biggest part of their money back, the villains were not satisfied.

They were certain that Spencer Payton had a big sum of money with him, and they longed to get hold of it.

It mattered not to them how they got it, either. If they could win it in a gambling game, all right; but if they could not do it that way they would be quite willing to steal it if they got the opportunity.

And the horse dealer, who was their friend and partner,

more than one game that had been played, was quite eager to get satisfaction on Young Wild West.

Though he had made out that he bore the boy no ill-feeling, he was really a very vindictive man, and he would stop at nothing in order to avenge a wrong, whether it was only fancied or real.

This man bore the name of Gildersleeve, and as soon as Young Wild West and his companions rode away from the hotel he called the two gamblers in a private room with him.

"What do you think them fellers is after, anyhow?" he asked.

"I don't know," retorted Wall. "It seems sorter funny that they would bring their horses on ther train with 'em an' git off here, don't it?"

"Well, they must have some purpose in view. I would just like to know where they're bound, an' if it wasn't too fur I'd follow 'em up an' git square on Young Wild West. He almost broke my neck by throwing me over his head, an' when a man does that to me you kin bet I'm goin' to git square on him some time, even if I have to blow a hole through his carcass with a shooter to do it."

"I don't blame yer fur wantin' revenge," spoke up Pete Dougherty. "But you'd better be mighty careful how you go about it, hadn't he, Jerry?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Young Wild West is the quickest fellow I ever seen with a gun, an' I've seen a good many. I'm putty good meself, but I ain't nowhere with him."

"Well, never mind about that. We'll find a chance to git square, if we do foller 'em up, an' we might make it pay in ther end, too. There's a lot of money in that crowd, I'll bet."

"Yes, I have an idea that there is over twenty thousand dollars in cash among the five of 'em," observed Jerry Wall.

"Well, what do you say if we foller 'em up an' git it from 'em, then?"

"Good!" exclaimed the two. "An' we'll be able to git our revenge at ther same time."

"That's so; but you can't leave your business very long, kin yeu?"

"Oh, I have got my boy broke so he kin take care of it fur a few days, I reckon," replied the horse dealer. "A little trin through ther mountains will do me good, anyhow, I reckon. I'll go with you fellers."

"Well, we'll go yer!" exclaimed Wall.

"We will start right away, then," said Gildersleeve. "We want that money they've got with 'em, an' I, for one, want revenge."

"I guess we'll all enjoy a little of that," replied Wall. "I would like nothing better than to get Young Wild West by the throat with his havin' no chance to pull a shooter on me."

"If I ever git him that way," and the horse dealer shrugged his shoulders. "I'll——"

"That's all right. Don't say it!" interrupted Pete Dougherty.

"We know what you mean," added Jerry Wall.

"Well, I'll furnish ther horses fur us," remarked Gildersleeve, after a pause. "Come on! We'll go over to ther stable now."

The three conspirators got up and went out into the bar-room of the place.

Then they had a drink all around and left.

They went right over to the horse-dealer's, and in half an hour they were mounted and ready to leave.

There was a big grocery and supply store right opposite the horse dealer's place, and as they rode out from the stable they saw two big negroes halt in front of it.

They were mounted on mules, and had two extra ones with them.

"What do you think of them fellers?" asked Gildersleeve, looking in the direction of the blacks. "They're what yer kin call 'em, ain't they?"

"I . . . I've seen 'em in town before. Where do they be-
long to now?" retorted Wall.

"They's somethin' that no one kin find out. They can't never be comin' talk—leastwise, they make out they can't, 'cause ther storekeeper don't know where ther stuff goes to. They sell 'em. They fetch gold dust to him, an' he's mighty glad to git it. I've heard that there is a feller back in ther mountains, who hasn't been or talked to a white man in a dozen years or more. People who have heard of him think ther big niggers come from his ranch."

"Pete Dougherty, if we couldn't find out where they git ther gold dust ther store?" spoke up Wall.

"Well, foller 'em," suggested Dougherty.

"No, you couldn't," answered Gildersleeve. "That's been tried, but it hain't never amounted to anything. They always disappear jest about ther time when anyone ain't thinkin' about it."

"I've heard somethin' about 'em. There seems to be a sorter mystery about them niggers," remarked Wall, thoughtfully. "Well, what do you say if we sorter watch out for 'em, an' foller ther trail of Young Wild West an' his gang at ther same time?"

"We kin do that easy enough, I reckon," exclaimed the horse-dealer.

The trio of rascals rode out of town and soon struck the trail they knew the giant blacks always took when they came into town to stock up with provisions.

Then they followed it along at a very slow pace until they came to a place where they noticed that some horsemen had turned off.

"Them's ther prints of ther nags of Young Wild West an' his gang, I reckon," said Gildersleeve.

"Most likely," nodded Wall. "I'd jest give a ten-dollar note to know what they're out here for."

"Well, we know that Payton didn't come with 'em, that's sartin," observed Dougherty. "You could easily tell that on ther train last night. They hadn't never spoke to each other until you pulled your gun."

"That's so," admitted his partner.

"Well, they're together now, and it looks as though they're out on business."

"Well, what shall we do—wait an' foller ther two big niggers, or strike out over this other trail?" asked Gildersleeve.

The gamblers looked at each other questioningly.

"What do you think about that?" said Wall.

"Well, I think we had better foller Young Wild West. Then we might run across ther niggers, too, when they come along."

"That's it!" exclaimed Dougherty.

It being decided, they turned from the regular trail and followed the less plain one made by our friends.

They moved along at a pretty good gait.

"We ought to overtake them by night," said the horse-dealer. "But we don't want to let them know that we are around, if we kin help it."

"That's so," and Wall shrugged his shoulders.

He was thinking of how Young Wild West had covered him so quickly in the car.

But though the three villains made pretty good headway, they did not travel any faster than our friends, and when the sun set they were three miles from the spot Wild and his companions had stopped at.

They kept right on, now being determined to get near enough to set eyes on those they were following.

But as it grew dark they lost the trail somehow, and the first thing they knew they found themselves following a trail that was well worn from frequent use.

The fact was that they had struck the regular trail leading over the rough country—the one taken by the giant blacks.

This was a much shorter way than the one by which our friends had come, and hence the negroes had got ahead of the three villains.

The horse-dealer and the gamblers proceeded a little slowly through the darkness, and in a little while they came in sight of a campfire that was just beginning to burn.

It was the one our friends had kindled.

The trio of scoundrels dismounted and talked in whispers as to what they should do next, for they were certain that they had come upon the camp of Young Wild West and his friends.

Before they arrived at anything definite they were startled by the awful shriek of the wild girl.

Their faces turned pale, for they were more or less superstitious, and the cry rang through their ears like a death knell.

"A ghost, I reckon," said Gildersleeve.

"No, it ain't a ghost, but somethin' worse," spoke up Dougherty. "Listen!"

They heard all that our friends had, for they were quite near the camp.

When silence once more reigned their courage returned a little.

Then Wall proposed that they leave their horses there and creep up close to the campfire and see what was going on. This they started to do without delay.

By going about it cautiously they managed to get within a

hundred feet of the camp without attracting the attention of our friends.

Then they remained in the bushes and watched and listened.

They saw that there were but four men in camp.

Young Wild West was not there.

But when they got used to the low voices of those who were there they soon learned that he had gone to find out who or what it was that had made the cries.

A sudden idea came into Jerry Wall's head.

He was not a coward, and he was also one who would take a great risk, especially if there was a chance to gain anything from it.

"Couldn't we surprise them fellers an' kill or capture 'em?" he asked his two companions, in a low whisper.

"We might be able to do it," answered Dougherty, though his tone showed that he was just the least bit doubtful about it.

"I think we could," said the horse-dealer, pulling his revolver from his belt.

"Let's try it, then."

"All right."

"We must be mighty careful about it, then," observed Pete Dougherty. "I've an idea that them friends of Young Wild West kin shoot putty straight."

"Well, there's only one way to do it right, you know," and the horse-dealer shrugged his shoulders.

"An' that is—"

"To drop 'em."

"Yes, all of 'em."

"Dead men tell no tales," added Wall, significantly.

"But if we was ter drop ther four of 'em an' git ther moner they've got, there'd be Young Wild West alive yet," said his partner.

"Well, I reckon ther three of us could put ther finishin' touches to him afore he got very far," retorted Gildersleeve. "He'd come back here on ther run if he heard shots fired, wouldn't he?"

"Oh, yes!" and Wall shook his head a little dubiously. "That's jest it. He might come back and get a bead on us afore we knowed it. Then somethin' would happen, most likely, that wouldn't be exactly agreeable to us."

"Well, you know what ther old sayin' is."

"What old sayin'?"

"Nothin' ventured, nothin' gained."

"That's true enough. All right. I won't back down. But when I start in this thing I'll have my mind made up that I'm liable to go under with my boots on afore I knows what's happened. It's a good idea to be prepared for such things, you know."

"Pshaw! You are beginnin' to croak, I guess."

The villains had unconsciously raised their voices in the little argument that they were having.

They forgot that they were so near the camp.

They talked away, and when they had decided to creep closer to the camp and open fire on the four from the bushes they suddenly became aware that there was no one to be seen about the fire!

They marvelled at this, of course, but could not imagine the cause of it.

But they were going to find out before long.

"Where are they?" whispered Gildersleeve.

"Blamed if I know," retorted Wall.

"Must have started to follow Young Wild West when we wasn't lookin'," remarked Dougherty.

"Well, we'll soon see. Come on!"

"They crept forward about ten feet further, and then a voice right in front of them exclaimed:

"Step right where you are, you measly coyotes! If you make ther let, 't mo' e you'll be dead men!"

"Thunder!" ejaculated Gildersleeve. "Don't shoot! We are friends!"

"I reckon you are friends, but not to us," was the reply. "Stay right where you are now! Boys, jest take ther shoot'rs from 'em an' tie 'em up."

It was Cheyenne Charlie who was speaking.

CHAPTER VII.

WILD'S EXPERIENCE IN THE CAVE.

Though somewhat crestfallen at the way affairs had turned out, Young Wild West was not the least bit frightened.

He fully realized that he was in the hand of three powerful blacks, who were ready to do anything the girl bid them.

But he could not make himself believe that he would be him killed.

With Nevada Nan in the lead, the three giants walked along a rocky path.

The fellow who bore Wild on his shoulder walked along as easily as though he was simply carrying a bundle.

In about five minutes from the time he had been set upon and captured, the wild girl halted before the face of a cliff.

Wild could see her as she turned to the blacks, and when she suddenly reached out and pulled aside what seemed to be a part of the gray rock that formed the face of the cliff he gave a start of surprise.

But he quickly saw that it was but a curtain of some hanging stuff, painted or dyed the color of the rocks.

The girl held this curtain aside, and the three giant mutes walked into a cave.

Then Nevada Nan came in, letting the curtain fall behind her.

At a sign from her our hero was placed on the ground.

The light from a smoky lantern illuminated the cave sufficiently for him to see that he was in a place that was evidently occupied by some one as a dwelling.

Suddenly he heard a strange purring sound, and the next instant he beheld a number of small animals walking over the ground that constituted the floor of the cave.

They were cats!

Some were full grown, and others were half grown, while here and there a kitten could be seen.

And they all showed signs of gladness at the appearance of Nevada Nan.

They ran up to her, rubbed against her, raised their backs and purred, and some stood on their hind feet and clawed gently at her dress.

Their eyes shone like sparks of fire in the weird-looking place, and Wild thought of the habitations of witches right away.

It was one of the strangest places he had ever seen.

But he was to have no time to meditate over it, for the girl spoke affectionately to the cats and then turned to the three mutes and made some motion to them.

The result was that they each took a huge torch from a corner of the cave and lighted them.

"Come!" cried Nevada Nan, taking our hero by the shoulder. "You are the first white man to set foot in this cave since my father went away. You have come here, but you will never go away. You are doomed! You are doomed—do you hear? The Wild Girl of the Sierras says so, and what she says must be so. Come!"

Wild did not feel like obeying just then.

He hung back as she urged him toward the rear of the cave.

But the black who had carried him there quickly picked him up as though he had been a child and carried him back before the mouth of a dark opening in the ground.

Then he was placed on his feet again, and his hat and weapons were laid on a bench close by.

The cats kept walking about the cave as though they thoroughly enjoyed it all.

Then the wild girl began to grow excited.

She laughed and cried by turns, never taking her eyes off her prisoner meanwhile.

She made a motion to the blacks, and they stepped back and stood in a line with the smoking torches held upright after the manner of soldiers in a dress parade.

"See here, Nevada Nan," said our hero, looking her squarely in the eyes, "you are making a mistake by treating me in this way. I did not come here to harm you. I am your friend, and I will prove it to you, if you will order your servants to untie me."

"Do you see that hole?" shrieked the wild girl, pointing to the mouth of the pit. "That's where you will go for daring to interfere with Nevada Nan."

The giant negroes stood like statues, while the cats purred in unison.

Young Wild West now realized that the supreme moment had arrived.

Coolness was the only thing that would save him, and he knew it.

"No," he said, looking the girl steadily in the eyes. "Your father would not allow anything like that if he was here."

Nevada Nan started back as though he had been struck.

"What do you mean?" she cried, looking at him in a startled manner. "Have you seen my father?"

"I have," answered our hero, knowing full well that he had struck the right vein. "If you have me thrown into that pit your father will never forgive you. In the country where he is no one harms another. All is peace there."

The girl looked at him for a moment in silence.

Then she stepped forward and drew a knife from her belt. The blacks looked at her wonderingly, but did not move. Wild did not remove his eyes from her face, and when she cut the ropes that bound his arms he stood perfectly still.

But she did not stop until she had severed the bonds from his ankles as well.

Then she lifted her head and drew her hand across her brow wearily.

"Oh, oh!" she cried, in a voice that was full of agony. "If I could only remember! Ha, ha, ha! I'm Nevada Nan, the Wild Girl of the Sierras! What are you doing here?"

Her voice changed instantly, and she was now looking at Wild with a savage gleam in her eyes.

The mutes advanced a step nearer, as though to protect her, when they saw the boy grab his weapons.

"Stand back, you fiends!" he exclaimed, leveling his revolver at them. "Nevada Nan, if you want your slaves to live, order them to stand aside and allow me to pass out of the cave."

His words had great effect on her.

She motioned them to go back, and then, dropping to the floor, she began fondling the cats, which seemed so willing to sympathize with her.

But Wild did not wait to look at her queer antics.

He walked quickly to the entrance to the cave, and lifting the curtain aside, passed out.

A sigh of relief escaped his lips when he got in the open air.

Then he looked around, so he would be able to find the place again, and noticing the stump of a tree within ten feet of the entrance, he stepped to it and slashed a chip from it with his knife.

This done, he made off in the direction the black had carried him from.

There was no trouble for him to find the way, since the path was a well-beaten one, and he was not long in reaching the spot where he had been attacked.

"This is one of the most curious adventures I ever had, he mused, as he hurried back to the camp. "I must see more of Nevada Nan and the cave she makes her home in. But I will wait till to-morrow."

He soon reached the camp.

"Well, boys, I'm back!" he called out. "But one time I was afraid I would never see you again."

"How is that, Wild?" Jim Dart answered.

Wild was just about to tell him when he noticed that they had three prisoners in the camp.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "So you have had visitors since I left, have you?"

"Yes, they are our three friends we left in Carson City to-day," retorted Cheyenne Charlie. "They're ther two gamblers an' ther horse-dealer."

"Well, I am surprised at this. Some people never know when they have got enough, it seems."

"It's all a mistake," spoke up Jerry Wall. "We was follerin' two big riggers till dark, an' then we got lost. We was huntin' aroun' for a good place to camp when we came in sight of your fire. Then these fellers jumped out on us an' made us prisoners."

"He talks like a man who was speakin' ther truth, Wild," said Cheyenne Charlie. "But he's lyin' as much as any man ever could lie. They was sneakin' up on us so they could shoot an' rob us. We heard 'em whisperin' about what they was goin' ter do, an' then we jest crawled out to meet 'em. We fixed 'em up in short order, too."

"That sounds more reasonable," and Wild cast a look of disapproval at the villains.

As soon as he had listened to what had happened in detail he related what had befallen him.

But he took his companions aside, as he did not want them to hear about it.

What Wall had said about the two blacks was sufficient to make Wild believe that the villains knew something about the girl of the Sierra.

He did not question them a little on that point.

"Do you know following the two blacks when you was travelin' of our camp?" he said to Jerry Wall.

"We started from Carson City to foller 'em, but we lost track of 'em just as it got dark," was the reply, in a hopeful

tone, for the villain thought that they were going to be released.

"What were you following them for?" went on our hero.

"Well, we ain't been ther first ones to foller 'em," answered Wall. "Lots have tried it, but they always lost 'em when they git around here somewhere."

"Don't any one know where they belong?"

"No."

"That seems rather strange. They must belong to some ranch that is located up here on the mountain. It is queer that no one could follow them."

"Well, it's a fact that no one ain't ever been able to do it," spoke up Gildersleeve. "Them same two blacks has been comin' into town regularly once a month ever since I lived in Carson City, which is goin' on three years. They pays fur what they git with gold dust, too, an' they have ther list of what they want written down in putty good writin'. Neither one of 'em kin talk or hear anythin', so people say. There's a mystery about 'em. Me an' my two friends here got it in our heads to foller 'em to-day an' try to learn where they got ther gold dust from."

"But you would not have followed them if you had not seen us come this way. You wanted the money Spencer Payton has with him, didn't you? Now own up to the truth."

"I'll take an oath that we didn't!" declared the horse dealer.

"Ah, shet up!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "Didn't we hear what you was talkin' about when you was sneakin' toward ther camp here? You'd better stop lyin', or I might take a notion to cut your tongues out."

This silenced them.

Young Wild West was at a loss what to do with the three prisoners.

He thought the matter over, and finally came to the conclusion that there was only one thing to do with them, and that was to let them go.

"Boys," said he, turning to his companions, "these fellows deserve to be hung for trying to sneak up and fire on you; but I never yet assisted in a hanging for such a cause as that. I am going to let them go."

No one offered the least objections to this.

"I am going to let them go," went on the daring boy, "with the understanding that the first time we run across them under circumstances that look suspicious we will shoot them. I guess they understand."

"I reckon we do!" exclaimed the horse dealer.

"Very well, then. Now, just remember that if we ever catch you sneakin' around where we are, no matter where it may be, you are going to get shot! Of course, that means unless you are quick enough to get in the first shots."

Now, then, you can go."

He stepped over and severed their bonds with his hunting knife.

"Thank you," said Pete Dougherty.

The other two said nothing.

They walked back to where they had left their horses, as though they had not a moment to spare.

"It ain't ther last we'll see of 'em, you kin bet on that," remarked Lively Rick, as the villains disappeared.

"You shouldn't have given them their shooters. They might use them on us before long," spoke up Spencer Payton.

"Oh, I hardly think they will bother us again to-night," replied Young Wild West. "We will be on the watch for them, anyhow, as long as we stay up here in the wilderness of the mountains. If we can't take care of such fellows as they are I'll miss my guess, that's all."

"That's what the matter!" exclaimed Jim Dart.

After they had arranged things so they would be pretty safe in case these villains did attack them they set in to talking about the remarkable adventure Wild had gone through.

"I have an idea that the girl is your nice," said our hero to Payton. "She has lost her mind, though, of that I am certain, and it is doubtful if she knows her real name. We must try to restore her to her father."

CHAPTER VIII.

SURPRISE UPON SURPRISE.

Our friends heard or saw nothing of the three villains that night, and when morning dawned they were up with the sun.

They had two purposes in view now. One was to find out all about the wild girl, and the other was to locate the stone panther and the ruins of the ancient city of the Aztecs.

They had shot game the day before, so Lively Rick undertook to get breakfast ready.

They sat down to eat, but not all at one time, for Wild was too cautious for that.

He did not propose to give their enemies the least chance to surprise them.

After all hands had eaten the horses were saddled, and then they mounted and rode off.

As the route laid down on the map led directly to the place where our hero had been taken into the cave by the black giant, they went that way.

Wild was not the least bit alarmed about their getting into trouble with the Wild Girl of the Sierras, or her negroes.

He knew they would be able to cope with twice the number they had seen so far.

They rode leisurely along, and soon came to the spot where our hero was positive the cave was.

But when they looked around and found there was no tree stump there he was much puzzled.

"Here is where it was," he said to his companions, as he brought his horse to a halt. "I am almost positive of it. But there was a stump right over there, and I cut a chip from it to mark the spot."

"I reckon you must be mistaken," retorted Cheyenne Charlie. "Places look a great deal alike up here in this wild part of their country. It must have been further on."

"I don't think so," he said. "But you may be right. We will see."

They rode over the well beaten trail for perhaps a quarter of a mile, but nothing that looked like the stump he had cut the chip from met the eyes of Young Wild West.

"There is no need of going any further in this direction, boys," he said. "We will go back to the spot we first halted at. Then I will see if that curtain that is the color of the rock is not there. It may be that the stump was a movable one, and that it was taken away on purpose."

"That's so!" exclaimed Jim. "I never thought of that."

They turned their horses and went back, watching out carefully for the stump, and at the same time keeping their eyes open for danger.

They were within fifty yards of the place that Wild declared was where he had emerged from the cave and cut a chip from the stump when suddenly Jim Dart gave an exclamation of surprise and pointed off to the left.

He said not a word, but it was hardly necessary just then, for as plainly as anything they had ever seen in their lives, our friends saw the head of a huge animal that was plainly of stone.

There had been a recent cave-in of the bank, for the dirt showed freshly, and a clump of bushes had become dislodged, revealing the thing to view.

"The stone panther!" cried Spencer Payton.

"That's just what it is!" answered Wild, shaking his head in a matter-of-fact way.

Then they forgot all about the cave of the wild girl for the time being and made for the spot.

Dart was the first to dismount and run up the bank to the stone figure that so resembled the head of an animal.

He reached out his hand and took hold of it.

Then he gave an exultant cry.

We are in luck!" he said. "Wild, get out that map and see if this is not the exact spot."

Wild climbed up to where he was first.

Then when he saw the half-buried stone figure he gave a nod of satisfaction.

"It is the stone panther, whether the map states it is here or not," he exclaimed.

He kicked the dirt away and felt of it to assure himself that there was no mistake about it, and then drew out the map.

Charlie and Rick kept watch while their three companions pondered over the roughly drawn sketch.

It did not take them long to easily understand that the markings on the map designated the spot where they were as the place.

The peaks and other landmarks described could be seen quite readily.

Wild quickly broke a dead branch from a tree that was handy by and began digging away the dirt from the image of stone.

The ground was soft and yielding, and gave way readily.

Jim Payton followed the example he set, and in less than ten minutes they had removed the dirt sufficiently to see the whole figure.

It was the exact cut of a crouching panther, only about three times as large.

"Well," said Wild, "according to the Indian's story, this

marks the entrance to a ruined city. Now the question is, how do we get to the entrance?"

"It is covered with earth, like the panther was, I suppose," retorted Jim. "Let us search about until we find it."

They began digging at the face of the blanting bank that was behind the image, and had removed considerable dirt, when suddenly the report of a rifle rang out, and a bullet went through Wild's hat.

The boy wheeled as quick as a flash and caught sight of a little streak coiling upward from behind a clump of bushes a hundred yards away.

But Cheyenne Charlie was ready to answer the shot, and he was not.

The scout saw the smoke, too, and his rifle flew to his shoulder.

Crack!

The whip-like report sounded, followed instantly by a yell of pain.

Charlie had not seen the villain who had so treacherously fired at our hero, but he shot into the bushes, just the same.

And he hit some one, too!

Crack!

Another report rang out, and a bullet whistled past the scout's head this time.

Young Wild West was ready, and before the echoes had died out his rifle spoke.

There was no cry, but our hero had caught a glimpse of something moving in the bushes, and he was certain that he had hit some one.

"Try it again, you sneaking cowards!" he cried out, in a ringing tone. "I dare you to fire again!"

There was no answer.

"I reckon ther measly coyotes have got enough!" said Cheyenne Charlie.

Just then the wild girl appeared on the scene.

No one saw where she had come from, but the sight of her was enough to startle them.

"How dare you come here!" she cried out, waving her arms threateningly. "I am Nevada Nan, the Wild Girl of the Sierras. This land is all mine. Begone, or I will call my slaves and have you killed!"

"Don't get excited, miss," answered Wild. "We are not going to interfere with you. If it was your slaves that fired at us just now you had better call them off—what is left of them, anyhow."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the girl.

Then she came running toward them.

When within a few feet of them she stopped and looked curiously at Young Wild West.

"I know you," she said, in a rather gentle tone. "You know where my father is."

"What was your father's name, Nevada Nan?" spoke up Spencer Payton, stepping over eagerly.

She looked at him in a dazed way, and then remained silent for a moment.

"I don't know!" she then blurted out. "I am Nevada Nan, the Wild Girl of the Sierras. That is all I know. Ha. ha. ha!"

She was in the act of turning to leave them, when her eyes suddenly lighted on the stone panther.

The wild light died from her eyes instantly, and an expression of wonderment came over her face.

She pushed her way past them and climbed on the back of the image.

Then something happened that caused our friends to stare blankly at each other and utter cries of surprise.

With a crashing noise the stone figure of the crouching panther disappeared from view, taking the wild girl with it.

A muffled shriek rang out, followed by the crashing noise made by tons of falling dirt, and then Young Wild West and his companions found themselves looking into a big opening in the ground.

"By all that's wonderful!" exclaimed Spencer Payton. Just then Wild felt the ground quivering under his feet.

"Come back here!" he shouted. "Hurry!"

They made a jump to do as he said, but Payton and Wild were not quick enough, and down went a portion of the ground, taking them with it.

A spot about twenty feet square had now caved in, and with pale faces the three who had escaped now looked at each other.

"Jim! Jim!" shouted Cheyenne Charlie.

There was no answer.

"They're goners!" cried the scout. "They've been swallowed up for fair!"

"Don't be too sure!" said Young Wild West, who never

gave up until he was certain that there was not a shadow of hope. "We will see. It may be that they did not fall very far. Let's get on that ledge up there. Then we can see into the hole."

He led the way to the spot indicated.

Cheyenne Charlie and Lively Rick looked as though they were just as certain that they would never set eyes on Jim Dart, Payton or the wild girl again as they were that they were living.

But they were ready to do just as Wild said, for all that. They always trusted to his judgment in trying cases.

Wild reached the ledge, and, leaning over, took a look into the hole that had so suddenly opened.

He could see the bottom.

It was not more than twenty feet, either, but there were no signs of those who had tumbled in.

Suddenly his eyes lighted on the image of the panther.

It was lying half buried in a heap of soft dirt.

Then it occurred to him that those who had fallen in must be buried.

"Boys," said he, solemnly, "one of us has got to go down there, and right away, too."

"How are we goin' to git there?" asked Lively Rick, looking at our hero hopelessly.

"Fetch a lariat—quick!"

"Oh!"

Both Rick and Charlie made for the horses.

They each got a lariat and started to return.

But when they looked up at the ledge they saw that Wild was not there.

They thought a little strange of this, but as there was an angle of rock a few yards from where they had left him standing, it struck them that he might have gone around to try and get a better view.

They got upon the ledge, and then Charlie called out:

"Here, Wild! Here's ther lariats!"

But only the echoes of their own voices came to their ears.

Again the scout called out, but the result was the same.

They walked around the angle and found that the ledge ended abruptly there, so there was no possibility of the boy having walked away in that direction.

Both cried out, then, despair and anxiety mingling in the tones of their voices.

"Wild! Wild! Where are you?" shouted the scout.

"Answer, won't yer, Wild?" added Lively Rick.

"This is ther worst thing I ever seen. I never wanted to see anything happen to Young Wild West, like this. He's fell down into that hole, jest as sure as we're standin' here."

"That's erbout the size of it, Charlie," nodded Rick. "It's awful, ain't it?"

"Well, there's only one thing for us to do."

"What's that?"

"One of us must go down there, jest as Wild was gettin' ready to do."

"All right. I'll lower you down, Charlie."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two men turned as though they had received an electric shock.

Approaching the hole was Nevada Nan!

CHAPTER IX.

THE ESCAPE FROM THE UNDERGROUND PLACE.

When Jim Dart and Spencer Payton felt themselves going downward they thought they were lost.

They grabbed right and left to catch something that would stay their descent, but it was useless.

With a rush and a roar the pile of dirt struck the bottom of the hole, and they were rolled over and over through a cloud of dust, the breath nearly shaken out of their bodies.

But they had not been killed by the fall, anyhow, and no bones were broken.

Blinded and confused, they staggered to their feet and found they were on a solid foundation of smooth stone.

But they could not see a thing, so thick was the dust.

Suddenly they heard their names called from somewhere above.

The voice sounded far away, but they readily recognized it as Cheyenne Charlie's.

Jim was just going to answer, when a heavy hand was clapped over his mouth, and he was seized in a vise-like grip.

The same thing happened to Payton, and the next instant the pair of them were being whisked through a dark passage.

Through they struggled wildly to get out of the clutches of their captors, it was entirely useless.

They were as helpless as babes.

Jim and Payton were not carried more than a couple of hundred feet.

Then they were placed on the ground and held quite gently, while a third party approached with a blazing torch.

Dart was waiting anxiously to get a glimpse of their captors.

He was soon able to distinguish them.

They were negroes of gigantic stature.

Then he knew that the slaves of Nevada Nan had caught them.

But where was the girl?

Had she been buried under the dirt when she went down with the stone image?

The boy hardly thought this probable.

He laid the capture of Payton and himself to the girl.

The underground place they had tumbled into must connect with the cave of the queer person who called herself Nevada Nan.

Jim was in hopes that he would get a chance to let out a yell to let Wild know they were alive, but he was disappointed, for the black who came up with the torch very quickly gagged them.

Then, assisted by the other two, he bound the captives hand and foot.

All this was done in silence, nothing being heard but the soft footfalls of the mutes.

The torch was stuck in a crevice in the rocky side of the passage, and then the three giants went back to the place where they had captured our two friends, leaving them to themselves.

They could not talk, but they made the best they could of it by looking around.

Payton was pretty badly frightened, but Jim Dart was taking it cool.

He had an idea that when the wild girl appeared and gave him a chance to talk he could play the same tactics as Wild had done.

He took a look around in the dimly-lighted place as far as he could, and saw that the passage, which was at least twenty-five feet in width, went right on nearly straight from the spot where the cave-in occurred.

It was over ten feet to the ceiling, or roof, as it might more properly be called, and was quite regular, as though it had been formed by the hand of man.

Jim got to doing a lot of thinking then.

It occurred to him that they had really found the ruins of an ancient city of the Aztecs, and he also thought that the Wild Girl of the Sierras knew all about it.

"She might be putting it on that she's crazy," he thought, "just to throw people off from finding the treasure that is now supposed to be stored here. Well, I don't like this idea of being bound and gagged much, but I suppose I will have to put up with it and wait for something to turn up."

"Jim's meditations were suddenly cut short by hearing foot-steps approaching through the darkness.

The blacks were coming back again.

A minute later they appeared, and in the dim light thrown out by the smoky torch he saw that one of them carried a burden on his shoulder.

At first Dart thought it was the wild girl, but a second glance told him better.

It was a male figure.

The instant the burden was placed on the ground he saw who it was.

It was Young Wild West.

Bound and gagged, our hero was placed beside the other two captives, and then the three blacks went back again.

Jim now made frantic efforts to slip his bonds.

Much to his satisfaction, he felt them give.

His wrists were large, and he felt that he could get them free.

He pulled and tugged, and the next moment he pulled his right hand free.

The other came loose, as a matter of course.

Then he ripped the gag from his mouth and untied his ankles, saying in a whisper as he did so:

"Boys, I am loose! Now, just wait a second, and we will be all right."

He started right in on Wild, and soon had his hands free.

Then he performed a like service for Payton.

Their belts containing their revolvers and knives had been thrown in a heap on the hard stone floor, and Jim quickly got them.

By the time he had buckled his own around him his companions had finished liberating themselves.

"I guess we are all right, after all," said Wild in a whisper. "I took a slide down into the pit when I wasn't expecting it, but I am glad I did now."

"Where are Charlie and Lively Rick?" asked Payton.

"Up above," was the reply. "I suppose they will be much alarmed when they find that I have disappeared, too."

"Why, didn't they see you when you slid down?" questioned Jim Dart.

"No. I sent them to get a lariat from the horses, and they had not much more than started when I felt a portion of the ledge I was standing on give way, and down I came into the pit as though I was descending a steep hill on a sled. Though startled somewhat, I was not much frightened. But just as I got upon my feet in the midst of a cloud of dust I was seized and overpowered, and then bound and gagged and brought here. It seemed to be but a few seconds from the time I slipped and was brought here."

"Where do you think we are?" asked Payton.

"Why, in part of the ruins of the ancient city, of course."

"And the Wild Girl of the Sierras?"

"She is somewhere around here. She probably knows all about this place. If that wasn't the case, why would her three big black men be here?"

"Then you don't think she was buried in the dirt when the stone panther went down with her?"

"No. We were not buried, were we? She stood a better chance than you fellows did, for she was right on top of the image when it went down."

"Yes, but it seemed to drop right down straight."

"But it didn't, though, no more than the rest of us did. It came down a steep descent that is almost as smooth as glass."

"Well, that is the way we come, when I think of it," admitted Jim Dart.

Before anything further could be said they heard the blacks coming back.

"We must get away from here," said Wild.

"Which way?" asked Jim.

"Straight ahead. There is no use trying to get up out of here by the way we came down. Come on!"

The three started softly through the passage, leaving the torch where it had been placed by the blacks.

They knew the mutes were about to receive a surprise that would set them to worrying.

Feeling his way along, Wild led the way until they had covered probably a hundred feet.

Then he found that the passage ran upward in quite a steep incline.

And it narrowed down, too, so they could almost reach out and touch the sides.

They had just gone up a few yards when they heard the quick patter of footsteps behind them.

The three blacks had discovered their escape and were after them.

Young Wild West did not want to shoot the giants.

But he was resolved to get out of the underground place at all hazards.

"Hurry!" he whispered, and then he quickened his pace.

Up the ascent they ran, and then they suddenly saw a faint light.

That it was the opening they felt certain.

As soon as they could see for a certainty that there were no pitfalls before them they shot forward as fast as they could go.

Wild reached the passage two seconds later and found himself standing in a sort of pit that was probably twelve feet in depth.

There was a rope ladder hanging from above, and he saw it the first thing.

Catching Spencer Payton by the arm, he made him go up as fast as he could.

Then Wild made Jim follow.

He was like the captain who wanted to be the last to leave his ship.

Dart's feet were no sooner out of the way than he started after him.

He knew he had not an instant to spare, for he could see the approaching forms of the blacks now.

They waved their hands wildly, but did not attempt to use a weapon on him.

Each of them carried a long-bladed knife in his belt, but neither of them did so much as draw them.

Friends they did not have.

But our hero was not aware of this fact.

He wanted to get out of their reach as quickly as he could. As he ran up the rope ladder and reached the top of the ground that surrounded the pit, he seized the ladder and attempted to pull it up after him.

But at that very instant the foremost black caught hold of it and placed his foot on one of the lower rungs.

Zip! Zip!

Jim Dart was thoughtful enough to whip out his knife and sever the two ropes that held the ladder to a stake that was driven in the ground.

Thud!

They heard the sound of a heavy body falling.

The giant mute had taken a tumble.

Wild glanced around him, and found they were in a cave.

The next minute Wild had pushed the curtain aside, and they stepped out into the open air.

At that instant they heard a scream.

Then they saw Nevada Nan rushing toward them with two men in pursuit.

The two men were Cheyenne Charlie and Lively Rick.

"Hello, boys!" called out Young Wild West. "What is the trouble?"

"You fiends! You fiends!" shouted the wild girl, coming from the cave. "You shall all die for this."

She stamped her foot on the ground and waved her hands wildly over her head.

But her faithful slaves did not come.

"Calm yourself," said Wild, walking leisurely up to her.

"There is no need of your acting this way. What is the matter with you, anyway, Nevada Nan? Calm yourself, and we will help you find your father."

As the last words left his lips the girl turned as pale as death and dropped upon her knees.

"Oh, oh, my head!" she cried, feebly. "What is the matter with me? Papa! Oh, papa! Where are you?"

Wild stepped to her side, and taking her tenderly by the arms, lifted her to her feet and led her into the cave.

She did not try to prevent him, nor did she utter a word.

Jim held the curtains aside for him, and noticing a rude couch that was made of the skins of wild animals near the entrance, he let her down upon it as gently as a mother could have done it.

The cats living in the cave immediately swarmed toward their mistress, and, leaving the girl to them, Wild left the cave.

"That girl has lost her reason," he said to his companions.

"If it could only be restored to her we would learn a whole lot, I am thinking."

CHAPTER X.

WALL AND GILDERSLEEVE.

The horse dealer and the two gamblers were very glad to get off so easily, and when they reached their horses they mounted and rode back over the trail a full mile.

Then, at the suggestion of Wall, they halted and picked out a place to camp for the night.

Pete Dougherty worked away in silence and soon got a good fire going.

Then he produced some of the food they had brought with them and proceeded to eat.

The others joined in with him and talked away, while Dougherty remained silent.

It was not until he had finished the rather frugal repast and was lighting his pipe that he said anything.

Then he looked at his companions thoughtfully, and said: "Boys, let's go back to Carson City in the mornin'."

"Not much!" cried Gildersleeve. "I ain't goin' back there till I git square on Young Wild West."

"Same here!" exclaimed Wall. "What's ther matter with yer, Pete?"

"Nothin', only I'm satisfied that one of us will die suddenly if we bother them fellers ag'in, an' it runs in my head that it might be me."

"You talk like a fool!" said the horse dealer, with a sneer. "Be a man, can't yer?"

"I'll stick to you fellers, don't worry about that," was the quick rejoinder. "I wouldn't sneak away from yer, not if I knew I was goin' to die by stavin'. I'll be a man, all right, but I'm bound to let my thought out ter yer."

The two men laughed, and Dougherty lay down and puffed away at his pipe.

Pretty soon they rolled themselves in their blankets, after putting a couple of logs on the fire to keep it going, and turned in.

they had no need of keeping a watch. They would keep the wild animals away, and it was not likely that they would be bothered by anything human. And they were not.

Pete Dougherty was the first one to get up in the morning. He had not slept very well, and he seemed to be glad when the sun showed itself in the east.

He got the fire going, and then started in to cook breakfast and boil some coffee to wash it down.

When it was ready he roused his companions.

"You got up early, I reckon," observed Gildersleeve, as he walked over to the little brook that was close by.

"Yes," replied Dougherty. "I couldn't sleep very well."

"Well, after Young Wild West is out of ther way you'll feel easier, an' then you kin sleep all right."

"I might."

"Well, I know you will. You've got it in your head that he is going to kill one of us. But jest put it the other way, fur one of us is goin' to kill him, an' that before many hours, too."

The three ate their morning meal, and then Gildersleeve proceeded to saddle his horse.

Wall and Dougherty followed his example, and a few minutes later they were mounted and riding off in the direction of the camp of Young Wild West and his friends.

They rode along rather cautiously, and soon came in sight of the spot where they had been captured the night before.

There was no one there now.

"They've gone, boys!" said Gildersleeve. "Come! We must catch up to 'em! Remember, Young Wild West must go first!"

"That's right!" answered Wall.

They followed the path in single file until presently they reached the little clearing in front of the cave of the wild girl.

Then it was that they caught sight of our friends as they were clustered about the stone panther.

At a word from the horse dealer they all dismounted.

"Now, I reckon we kin do ther business," the villain remarked. "We kin do it up brown, too, for they seem to be interested so much that they won't notice us. Let's git as close as we kin, now."

Leaving their horses behind a thick clump of bushes, they began crawling along the edge of the clearing in order to get to a good place to fire upon the unsuspecting five.

"Who's ther best shot of us three?" asked Gildersleeve.

"Pete is a first-class shot with a rifle," answered Jerry Wall.

"Well, I'm putty good myself. I reckon I'll take ther first shot at Young Wild West. Watch me drop him now! I've hit a bull's-eye at that distance more than once."

He knelt down behind a bush and fired.

The result of the shot is already known to the reader.

But the echoes of the report had scarcely died out when an answering shot came, and Gildersleeve got a bullet in his arm.

"I'll fix ther feller who hit you, pard," said Wall, and then he fired.

At that very instant Pete Dougherty started to crawl away in the bushes.

It was the last move he ever made.

It so happened that he was the one Young Wild West caught sight of, and when the report rang out Dougherty fell over without so much as a groan escaping his lips.

His presentiment had come true.

With a pale face, Jerry Wall scampered off for the horses.

He had seen his gambling partner go under, and that was enough for him.

Gildersleeve got upon his feet and hastened after him, and luckily for the two villains, Young Wild West and his companion did not catch a glimpse of them.

When they reached the horses Wall assisted his companion to mount, and then, without a word, they rode off, taking a deer path that led to the north.

When about a mile had been covered the horse dealer began to groan from the pain his wound caused him.

"Can't ar' tie it up for me, Wall, won't yer?" he asked, panting.

"I will," was the reply. "It's too bad things worked out like they did, ain't it?"

"Well, it's just as poor Pete aid, after all, wasn't it?"

"It turned out that way."

He came to a halt, and Gildersleeve quickly bared his arm. It was only a few wound he had received, but it was quite painful and was bleeding profusely.

"Don't shoot your right or through," said Wall, as he took

his companion's handkerchief and proceeded to bind up the wound.

"It didn't touch ther bone, did it?" queried the horse dealer, eagerly.

"I reckon not," was the reply. "If it did, it didn't break it. You'll be all right in a few days, if nothin' else sets in."

"Jerry, let's git back to Carson City."

"Good! I reckon we've had enough."

"But how about poor Pete? His body lays back there, you know."

"It's too bad; but I ain't goin' back to bury it."

"No, not now. But mebbe them fellers will go away putty soon. Then we might do it. I'm a putty bad man, but I hate to leave ther body of a friend lyin' on top of ther ground."

"Well, if you think we kin take ther risk I'm willin' to go back by an' by an' see what we kin do."

"I think we'd better."

They dismounted and sat down to rest for half an hour.

Then they got up, and Gildersleeve proposed that they go back and take a look around.

When they got close enough to where Dougherty had fallen they proceeded with more caution than they had done at first.

They soon came in sight of the remains of the dead gambler.

The body lay as they had left it.

Wall crept forward and took a look at the place where they had last seen our friends.

There was not a soul to be seen.

Things looked so different there that the gambler gave a start of surprise.

The place where Young Wild West and his friends had been standing when the shots were exchanged had vanished, and a big hole was there.

Wall whispered to his companion to come over.

The horse dealer shook his head.

"Looks as though there's been a landslide, or somethin'," he answered.

"Yes, an' ther chances are that it buried them fellers."

"By Jove, I believe you're right!" exclaimed Gildersleeve. "I jest hope it has been that way."

They crouched there watching for fully five minutes.

But not a soul did they see.

Then they became a little bolder, and arose to their feet.

"We'll bury poor Pete, an' then we'll take a walk aroun' there an' see what has happened," observed Wall.

"Yes, but where are we goin' to do ther buryin'? I can't do much diggin' with only one hand, you know."

"We'll find a hole, mebbe."

They looked around, and soon found a sort of crevice that would answer the purpose.

Then they relieved the corpse of the money and other things of value that were on it and dragged it over.

The body was deposited into the crevice, and it dropped down out of sight.

"I reckon that will do," observed Wall. "Poor Pete! That's the last we will see of him."

After taking another look around the two villains went back to their horses.

They mounted and followed the trail right to the spot where our friends had last been seen.

"They either fell into that hole when ther cave-in took place, or they've gone on," said Gildersleeve, wincing as a twinge of pain shot through his wounded arm.

"That's what's ther matter," replied Wall. "What's ther matter? Does yer arm hurt?"

"Yes."

"I guess we'd better put somethin' on it, then."

Both took some tobacco into their mouths and quickly worked it into the proper consistency.

Then the bandage was removed, and Wall proceeded to dress the wound.

He had just finished doing it, when, turning at a noise behind him, he saw the two giant blacks they had observed in Carson City approaching them.

"Hello!" cried Jerry. "Where did you fellers come from?"

There was no reply, as a matter of course.

The mutes walked right up to them, and then, without the least warning, grabbed hold of them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOLD IN THE CAVERN.

When Young Wild West walked out of the cave, after leaving Nevada Nan reclining on the couch, he took a good look around the front of it.

The stump he had cut a chip from the night before was still among the missing, and then he saw how easily they had been deceived at first.

Cheyenne Charlie and Lively Rick were so delighted at finding their companions alive and unhurt that they had done little but to dance around and show their pleasure.

But suddenly the wild girl came to herself again.

She came out of the cave in a state of great excitement.

"Where are my slaves?" she demanded, facing Wild and looking at him eagerly.

"In the pit, where you were going to put me last night," he answered. "Don't get excited, Nevada Nan."

She understood him, and back into the cave she went.

"Come!" exclaimed our hero. "Let us go in. We will have to tame these three giants, so we may as well do it first as last."

The curtain was pushed aside, and the five walked inside. They saw the girl in the rear of the cave, leaning over the edge of the pit.

Wild quickly ran to her side.

"You must tell your men not to interfere with us, Nevada Nan," he said. "I will help you to get them up here."

Just then one of the blacks threw the end of the rope ladder up.

Wild caught it very neatly, and before the wild girl was aware of what he was doing, he proceeded to tie it to the stake.

Her eyes opened wide when she saw this move on his part. Then her face softened.

Young Wild West stepped back as the foremost of the giant negroes leaped out and stood before him.

The mute was in a great rage, and he flew at the boy with the savageness of a grizzly.

Wild jumped out of his reach, and then, thrusting out his foot, tripped him up.

The black fell heavily just as the second one got out of the hole.

Our hero did not give him a chance at all, but lowering his head, he darted between his legs, catching him by the ankles as he did so.

There was a quick movement, and then over went the fellow, landing squarely upon the other, who was in the act of getting up.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart quickly stepped over and leveled their revolvers at the heads of the fallen giants.

The other one came up, but did not get off the ladder when he saw what was going on.

Then Nevada Nan made some queer motions to him, some of which plainly meant that our friends were not to be interfered with any longer.

Turning to Wild, she said:

"I am Nevada Nan, the Wild Girl of the Sierras, but you and your friends shall not be harmed. You can stay here as long as you like."

"Thank you, miss!" retorted our hero, bowing to her.

The girl then walked over to the two men on the ground under cover of the revolvers of Charlie and Jim, and made a few signs to them.

Our friends could readily understand what she conveyed to them, so they stepped aside and allowed the two big blacks to get up.

Nevada Nan appeared to be quite rational now.

"What did you say your name was?" she asked, looking rather timidly at our hero.

"Young Wild West," he answered.

"Oh, yes! What did you come here to the mountains for?"

"For two purposes."

"Two purposes?"

"Yes."

"Will you tell them to me?"

"Yes; one was to find the ruins of an ancient city, the entrance of which was marked by a big stone statue of a crouching panther, and the other was to find a man by the name of John Payton, if he is yet alive."

A look of bewilderment came over the face of the wild girl.

"John Payton," she murmured, half to herself. "I—I—oh! I have heard that name. But my head hurts me. It hurts me so I cannot think. Ah! I am Nevada Nan, the Wild Girl of the Sierras! I own the mountains and the valleys. All is mine. No one dares to tread the earth unless I give them permission. You have my permission, Young Wild West. You and your friends can go to the ruined city and get the gold that is there. Nevada Nan says so, and her word is law!"

Wild took her gently by the arm and led her to a nearby bench.

As she sat down one of the many cats in the cave jumped upon her lap.

She began stroking the animal, and while she was thus engaged our hero took a good look at her.

Suddenly he noticed a deep scar just back of her left temple.

"You were badly hurt some time ago, Nevada Nan," he said, pointing to the scar.

"Me? Oh, no!" she answered quickly. "I have had that scar ever since I can remember. I was never hurt. I have always lived here in the mountains, and my three black slaves have always done my bidding. I am all right, Young Wild West. I know no one, and do not want to know any one."

"But you know me now, don't you?"

"Yes, pretty well," she answered, after a slight pause. "You would not do anything wrong; I know that much of you."

"You say that we can have some of the gold that is in the ruins of the ancient city. Will you go with us to get it?"

As Wild asked her this question he looked at her steadily for a full minute.

She returned the gaze without flinching, and then answered:

"Yes, I will go with you."

Then Nevada Nan arose.

"Come!" she said.

At this moment Jim Dart, who had been peeping from the entrance of the cave, came hurriedly over to Wild.

"Two of the villains who fired on us this morning are up there on the hill," he said. "They are the horse dealer and one of the gamblers."

Wild followed him to the curtain, and Nevada Nan went along.

All three took a look at the men.

"They are not your friends?" said the girl, questioningly.

"No," retorted Jim. "They tried to kill us."

"I will have my slaves make prisoners of them, then."

She went to the rear of the cave and made some motions to the three giant blacks.

They nodded and followed her to the entrance.

Then she picked out two of them and pointed to the two men and gave them to understand that they must be caught and brought to the cave.

They seized the rascals, as has been told.

Jerry Wall and Gildersleeve were but infants in the hands of the negroes, and though they struggled frantically to get free, they were brought straight into the cave.

Nevada Nan nodded in the direction of Young Wild West, and the blacks placed the captives on the ground before him.

"So we meet again, do we?" asked our hero, calmly. "I told you fellows never to show up around here again, didn't I?"

"We didn't mean no harm," answered the horse dealer, in a wheedling tone.

"No, of course you didn't when you shot at us about an hour ago," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "You fellows are hogs, 'cause you don't know when you have got enough. You oughter be skinned alive, you measly coyotes!"

"Don't kill us!" pleaded Jerry Wall, who was as pale as a sheet. "If you let us go we will strike right out fur Carson City an' never show up aroun' here ag'in."

"I don't believe you. You have lied once, and I don't mean that will happen again. Where is the other fellow?"

"He's dead. You shot him."

"Ah!"

"He didn't want to come back, either," added Gildersleeve. "He said that he had a presentiment that one of us would get dropped if we did come back."

"And the presentiment came true, then?" observed Spencer Payton.

"Yes, poor Pete got it."

"Tie them up!" exclaimed Wild. "I have not decided what we will do with them yet."

Nevada Nan made the mutes understand what was required of them, and they quickly bound the villains hand and foot.

Gildersleeve let out a yell for help when he was dragged over into a corner and dropped in a heap.

"Holler away, you coward!" said Lively Rick. "That jest shows ther kind of stuff you're made of."

"You've got to die!" shouted Nevada Nan, darting toward them like a tigress. "You came here to kill, so you shall be killed! Do you hear what I say? I'm Nevada Nan, the Wild Girl of the Sierras, and my word is law!"

"She has got one of her spells again," whispered Jim Dart.

"Yes," answered Wild, as he took the girl gently by the arm. "Come, Nevada Nan. We will attend to those bad men a little later. Take us to the place you promised to."

"Oh, all right, Young Wild West! Come! We will go to the ~~ruins~~ of the ancient city. Come!"

With the nimbleness that rivaled any of the numerous cats, she ran over to the opening into which hung the rope ladder.

She made motions to the three giant negroes that meant that they should stay there and keep watch on the prisoners, and then down the ladder she went.

Young Wild West was the one to follow her, and then came the rest of our friends.

When they all got to the bottom of the pit the wild girl picked up a torch that was standing against a pointed rock, and exclaimed:

"Light this, so we may see the way."

Wild struck a match and applied it to the end of the torch in a jiffy.

Then the girl took it from his hand.

Without a word she started along the passage, and soon they were at the spot where the cave-in had occurred.

She shook her head sadly as she looked up at the sky that shone through the opening.

"The secret will soon be found now, so you may as well take all the gold there is there," she said, in a dismal tone of voice. "I do not want it."

Then for the first time Wild saw that there was a vast cavern off to the left.

There had been so much dust in the place when he took his impromptu tumble into it that he had been unable to see anything.

But now he could see huge blocks and columns of stone lying around in disorder.

Here and there a fancy-shaped urn or drinking vessel could be discerned still in a good state of preservation.

Young Wild West and his companions followed the wild girl into the depths of the cavern in silence.

They proceeded on for perhaps two hundred yards, and there was no light to show them the way but the torch the girl carried.

Half a minute later she halted before a huge block of stone that was hollowed out in the shape of a drinking trough for animals.

"There!" she exclaimed, pointing into it. "There is money for you—money that has been lying there for hundreds of years undisturbed. Who put it there Nevada Nan does not know. But it is all yours, Young Wild West."

Our friends rubbed their eyes when they looked into the hollow block of stone.

They could scarcely believe that they were not dreaming.

It was money, sure enough! It was thousands and thousands of dollars of Spanish gold pieces that they were looking at!

"Boys," said Young Wild West, "that is some of the gold the Spaniards brought with them when they came over to conquer Mexico. It was no doubt brought here by some of Montezuma's people when they fled to the north."

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Our friends gazed at the pile of golden coins in amazement. Nevada Nan watched them in silence.

To her the sight was nothing out of the ordinary.

"How long since you found this, Nevada Nan?" Wild asked, turning to her.

"A long time ago," she answered. "Years and years ago."

"But it can't be many years. You are very young. Was it here when you were a little child?"

He was trying to draw her out and make her think of her past.

"Child!" he echoed, looking at him in a vague way. "I never had a child. I have seen children, though—a few of them. I have always been like I am now."

"Try and think. See if you can't remember when you were a child," he urged.

"I can't think. I am Nevada Nan, the Wild Girl of the Sierra."

"What are the names of your slaves?"

"I do not know."

"Can they read or write?"

"I don't know. I can't. I'm sure of that."

"Have you any book in your cave?"

"Yes, I do, of them."

"Have you ever seen the slaves looking at books?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, we will go back to the cave and have a talk. Then we will see about this gold. Leave it where it is, boys. It will keep, I guess."

They seemed reluctant to leave it, but no one raised any objections, so they walked back through the cavern, Wild in the lead, with Nevada Nan at his side.

Back to the cave they went, finding the three giant negroes watching the prisoners, while the cats ran and played about at their feet.

"Ain't you goin' to let us go, Young Wild West?" said Gildersleeve, pleadingly.

"Yes," exclaimed Wild, who thought it would be a good idea to let the villains go, so they would not know anything of what they had found in the cavern below.

Our hero's companions looked at him in surprise.

"We can't lynch them very handy," he told them. "So what is the use of keeping them. Let them go back to Carson City."

"Just as you say," answered Payton.

"Tell the slaves that you don't want them to watch the prisoners any longer," said Wild to Nevada Nan.

She obeyed quickly enough, and the blacks promptly started to retire.

But Wild picked out the most intelligent looking one of the three and then went through the motion of writing on his hand.

The black nodded, almost eagerly, too.

"Cut those fellows loose, and if they don't get out of sight in five minutes, shoot them," Young Wild West said, turning to his friends.

Jim Dart took his knife from his belt and soon had the captives free.

They almost ran out of the cave in their eagerness to get away.

Wild now got a piece of paper and a pencil, and wrote on the paper:

"Do you understand this?"

The black looked at the writing and shook his head in the negative.

Nevada Nan stood watching them as though in a dream.

Suddenly she threw up her arms, and before any one could catch her she fell to the floor in a swoon.

The black sprang forward, and picking her up as though she had been an infant, placed her tenderly on a couch.

"Water!" said Wild, making motions as though he was bathing the girl's face.

The black understood, and he soon brought a basin full of pure spring water.

Then the work of reviving the girl began.

In a little while she came to.

"Oh, oh!" she exclaimed, feebly. "Where are you, father? Oh, what has happened?"

Then, much to our hero's surprise, he saw that the wound on the side of her head was bleeding.

"Lie quiet, miss," he said to her. "You are with friends."

A shudder passed through her body.

"They killed my father!" she groaned. "They hit me, too! Oh, the horrible black men! Drive them away!"

Wild raised his hand for silence.

He realized that the girl's reason had been suddenly restored to her.

"Keep your eyes on the blacks," he said to Cheyenne Charlie.

Then he sat at the side of the girl, and in the course of half an hour the following was revealed to them from her:

She had been living in a cabin in a secluded part of the mountain-side with her father, who was a recluse.

His name was John Payton, she said, and her name was Minna.

Three giant negroes had appeared at the cabin one dark night, and had slain her father before her eyes and then struck her down as she was in the act of shooting them.

That was all she knew.

"We must capture those blacks and make them prisoners, for they are murderers," said Wild.

The giants seemed to understand what was going on, for they went back in the cave and drew knives, as though to fight.

Young Wild West leveled his revolver at them and motioned to them to hold up their hands.

One of them obeyed.

The other two made a rush for the couch, their knives ready to be plunged into the heart of Nevada Nan.

Crack! Crack!

It was Cheyenne Charlie and Lively Rick who fired.

Down went the two black demons, their life-blood welling from their breasts.

The remaining one submitted to being bound, and was soon placed so it would be impossible for him to get away.

When the excitement had subsided and the bodies of the two slain blacks had been removed, Wild suggested that they get the gold that was in the cavern.

Some stout leather sacks were found in the cave, and all but our hero went down into the cavern and brought out the Spanish gold pieces.

Nevada Nan, or Minna Payton, as she said her name was, had fallen in a deep sleep, and our hero was satisfied that she would be all right when she awoke.

He had bandaged the bleeding wound about her head, and she appeared to be quite easy.

It was well along toward afternoon when the girl awoke.

When she did so her mind was as clear as a bell.

But she did not seem to know our friends, nor did she act as though she had ever seen the swarm of cats that kept close to her.

Then Wild gently told her what had happened, and how they had found her, also introducing Spencer Payton to her as her uncle from the East.

The girl bore it bravely.

Reared in the mountains, as she had been, she was possessed of a stout heart, so she did not break down and go into hysterics.

It was not until the next morning that our friends set out for Carson City.

They took Nevada Nan with them, of course.

The girl gladly accepted her uncle's invitation to return to the East with him and become a member of his household.

How long it had been since the murder of her father she could not tell, but when they reached Carson City they found out all about it.

The black giant was locked up in a jail, and so it happened that a Moor was imprisoned in the next cell to him.

Young Wild West was much astonished when the jailer sent word to him that the black had confessed all about the crime.

He went to the jail, accompanied by Spencer Payton, as not more than two would be admitted to see a prisoner.

Then he learned that the big black was not a mute, after all.

But he could not talk or understand English, and was deaf.

The story he had told the Moor was that he and his two companions were slaves who had escaped from Arabia.

They had drifted around the world, until at last they came to California on a sailing vessel.

They had been unable to get work on account of their ignorance of the ways of the country, and so had taken to the mountains, where they lived like wild men for several months.

One night about a year before the opening of our story they had come across the cabin of John Payton.

Then in a spirit of temporary madness—as he claimed—they had murdered the recluse and badly wounded his daughter, who came to with a mind that was bland.

They made themselves slaves to her, and obeyed her slightest wish.

The girl had a fondness for cats, and having a great number at the cabin, she had brought them to the cave.

As the blacks had burned the cabin after murdering the recluse, they had been living in the cave up to the time our friends found them there.

It was a remarkable story, but Wild did not think it advisable to give it out to the public just then.

Just why Minna Payton had given herself the name of Nevada Nan, and called herself the Wild Girl of the Sierras, is hard to tell.

She had come to the outskirts of Carson City several times to look at people, and she very readily got to understand that she was not like them.

But when Young Wild West and his friends came upon her it marked a turning-point in her life.

Her mind began to strain from the first time she met the dashing Young Prince of the Saddle.

And when the wound that had healed over and remained so for many months broke out afresh her mind was restored.

Young Wild West and his friends remained at Carson City for over a week.

During that time the giant black was tried, convicted and hanged.

The day before they left, Wild and his partners to return to Weston, and Spencer Payton and Nevada Nan to go to Philadelphia, our hero met Jerry Wall and Gildersleeve.

They were in the barroom of the hotel when he went in to ask the landlord for the amount of his bill.

The two villains turned pale when they saw him, for, though they had been in town ever since they were told to get back there, they had managed to avoid Young Wild West till now.

"How are you, gentlemen?" asked Wild, smiling at them in his free and easy way. "You got back from your trip through the mountains, I see."

"Yes, we came as soon as we could after you told us to," answered Wall, rather sheepishly.

"I am glad you did, gentlemen. You might have stayed there forever, if you hadn't."

"We knowed enough for that," spoke up the horse dealer. "Poor Pete Dougherty is there, and I reckon he'll stay there till doomsday."

"Quite likely. Well, if you've made up your minds to be good citizens I'll forgive you for trying to drop me up there or the mountains."

Gildersleeve, who had his arm in a sling, bowed, and retorted:

"Thank you, Young Wild West. I reckon I'm a better man now than I ever was."

"Me, too!" chimed in Jerry Wall.

That was the last our hero ever saw of the two men, but he doubted if they ever reformed.

When Young Wild West and his partners parted company with Nevada Nan and her uncle, each had an equal share of the gold that had been taken from the cavern.

A month or two later they heard that there had been a great cave-in at the spot where the stone panther had been, so that ended the cave.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST IN THE BAD LANDS; OR, HEMMED IN BY RED-SKINS."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

A small twister visited the ranch of Fred Christensen, at Gillette, Wyo., a few days ago. Mr. Christensen was making a few repairs on his shearing pens when he was picked up and carried fifty yards and thrown violently to the ground. He recovered consciousness a half hour later. Neighbors saw the cyclone but were not molested by it.

A romantic courtship ended in the marriage at Marlinton, W. Va., of Miss Dorothy Williams of that city and Leon Earl Passmore of Mount Morris, N. Y. A few weeks ago Miss Williams wrote her name on a railroad car standing on a side track there. The car chanced to pass through Rochester, N. Y., where Passmore was employed. He wrote a letter to Miss Williams. A courtship by mail resulted in the marriage.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gillespie, who reside near La Rue, O., were attracted to the barn by the screams of their two-year-old son, Lewis, and rushing to the place they found a fierce fight taking place between a large hog and their favorite collie. Close by laid the prostrate form of the lad, who had been attacked by the enraged hog, and but for the immediate interference of the dog no doubt would have been killed. As it was, he suffered five ugly gashes.

Two "dream burglars" rifled the house of Mrs. Josephine Robison of No. 2400 Howard Street, Kansas City, Mo., recently. They did so in fact, according to a report made shortly afterward by Mrs. Robison to the police. "The burglars came just as I had dreamed they would a week before," Mrs. Robison said, "and I lay awake and watched them do everything I had seen them do in my dream. I knew what was coming, before they did it, but I was so frightened I could not make an outcry." Mrs. Robison described the burglars as young men, one about twenty and the other twenty-two years old.

Women police of London are making good according to the chief officer of the woman's police force. They are employed in munition factories very largely to search the ingoing and outgoing women workers for contraband, keep order in trains, to inspect passports and to patrol the lanes and yards. They get \$10 weekly, with railway fare; sergeants receive \$11 and inspectors \$12. The chief officer says school teachers are particularly wanted for the force, as their training fits them admirably for police duties, which require good temper, patience and tact with firmness. The girls in the factories appear to be very fond of the women police and the government is asking for more to be appointed at various munition works throughout the country.

An illicit still concealed in the cellar of a barn on Joe Siegrist's ranch at Freshwater Bay, twelve miles from Port Angels, Wash., was raided the other day by P. B. Kearney, Deputy United States Internal Revenue Collector, assisted by State officers. The officers seized complete equipment for the still and a quantity of freshly made corn whisky. Before entering, the officers discovered and disconnected wires fixed to discharge a rifle protecting the trap door leading to the underground distillery. Siegrist was brought to Port Angels at night and arraigned before United States Commissioner James Stewart, who remanded him to the Federal Grand Jury.

Undisturbed by the failure of three large wrecking companies to reclaim the stranded steamer Sesostris, formerly of the Kosmos line, the British salvage tug Pilot will leave San Diego, Cal., shortly for Ocos, Guatemala, in an effort to salvage the vessel, which has been high and dry for nearly fourteen years. While loading coffee for Hamburg, Oct. 8, 1902, the Sesostris slipped her moorings and drifted onto the beach. The steamer, which is of 7,000 tons gross register, 400 feet long, was last reported lying in a small basin 100 feet from the water and surrounded by high banks of sand. The hull and engines are said to be in good condition. Shipping men said that with the present high cost of tonnage the ship could be sold for \$1,000,000.

To encourage the spirit of saving among employees, Charles B. Whittelsey, president of the Hartford factory of the United States Tire Company, has written to those of his workers who are with Uncle Sam's forces on the border and who left behind dependents, suggesting that their wages every alternate week be deposited in a savings bank, rather than the entire amount being paid weekly to their dependents. As was announced some weeks ago, the United States Rubber Company and its subsidiaries, which include the Hartford Company, are allowing full pay to all employees answering the call to arms, as well as holding open their positions until their return. It consequently followed that, while the pay went on as usual, the men enlisting shifted the responsibility of providing for their own needs over to the Government. Hence the suggestion for savings. That Mr. Whittelsey's idea has met with favor is indicated by the number of men who have put it into practice. The list of depositors grows daily, starting with a first-day deposit total of \$2,300. Interest is credited monthly to each account, so that the boys will have a few extra dollars to their credit when they come marching home, in addition to knowing that their dependents have been provided for during their absence.

Two Boys From Toughtown

OR

BOUND TO WORK THEIR CLAIM

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XXII.

JOE CAPTURES HANK HORN.

The sound came from up Long Canyon.

Another instantly followed, and Joe started back on the run to find Charley Francis and several others on their feet and ready for business.

"What's the matter? Was it you firing?" demanded Francis, seizing his rifle.

"No, no!" cried Joe. "It must have been Bill Norton. The sound came his way."

Three men started up the canyon on the run.

Joe was following then, when he suddenly discovered that Lawyer Scheister was not in his place.

"The shyster's gone!" he shouted.

"Burn that fellow! I said he ought to have been left behind!" cried Francis. "He is at the bottom of this!" and he ran on.

Joe sprang to the place where Tom was supposed to be sleeping with a sinking in his heart.

Something seemed to tell him what he was to find, and he found it.

The place was vacant.

Tom had disappeared!

At the same instant Francis was heard calling:

"Oh, White! White! Bring Graniss here! Poor Billy Norton has been shot dead!"

Trouble had come at midnight! Joe was almost overcome.

"Tom! Tom!" he shouted. "Oh, Tom!"

There was no answer except Charlie Francis' call repeated.

"Wake him up, White! Bring him here! Wake up all the boys! Billy Norton has been shot dead!"

In less time than it takes to tell it all hands were up and armed, and gathered about the body of poor Norton, who lay face downward on the floor of the canyon, shot through the heart.

"Where is Graniss?" demanded Francis. "Why isn't he here?"

"Listen to me. I've tried three times to tell you, Francis," said Joe, quietly. "Tom is missing. Wouldn't it be a good idea to send someone to take care of the horses and look after the gold before that gets missing, too?"

"It's done," replied Francis. "Back to Henuiker

Canyon, half a dozen of you!" he shouted. "Keep a sharp eye out!"

Then turning to Joe, he addde:

"What about Graniss? He must have chased the scoundrels who shot Bill."

"I don't know anything about that. He isn't where I left him, that's all."

"He must be found. We must get on his trail! Thunder! This is the worst ever!"

Charley Francis seemed to have lost his head.

He began by giving orders one minute and contradicting them the next.

But Joe was one of the kind who grows cool under trouble.

He seized a lantern and hurried to the place where Tom had slept.

There was no sign of blood. Nothing to indicate that the boy had been shot or, indeed, that he had ever been there, for Tom's rifle and blankets had vanished, too.

It was all a mystery, and ten minutes' careful investigation did not serve to clear it up a bit.

Probably Bill Norton could have explained it, but Bill was dead.

Joe let Charley Francis charge about until he was tired, and then a council of war was held.

"I don't see any use stopping here," said Francis. "This is a sneaking, dirty attack by the Bannister gang, who are afraid to tackle us in the open. I think we had better get a move on right away, if the gold is to be saved."

"I second the motion, with an amendment," replied Joe. "You fellows go ahead with the gold, but leave me behind to look up Graniss. I don't quit the canyons until I know what has become of my partner, that's one thing sure."

"It's up to you to decide, White," returned Francis. "Of course I meant to have a couple of the boys behind to trail Graniss, if he is to be found."

"You speak as if it wasn't likely he would be found."

"I speak as I feel, boy. I'm afraid it's all up with your friend Tom. Anyhow, we can't do nothing about that until daylight, whereas we can put ten or fifteen miles between us if we get a move on now."

"I stay."

Joe spoke positively, and his jaws closed with a snap.

Though always yielding enough when it was a question of his own opinion or Tom's, Joe could be as stubborn as a mule when put to it.

"Don't you want a couple of men to stay with you?" demanded Francis.

"They can't be spared."

"They mustn't stay alone."

"I'm not afraid."

Charley Francis looked at Joe admiringly.

"Say, there's more into that than I thought there was, a blamed sight," he said. "You're a whole team in yourself. All the same, you mustn't stop here alone. Jack Randal shall stay along with you."

"All right, and you will hurry on with the gold to Big Boom City."

"Exactly, and deliver it safe at Billy's office or perish in the attempt."

"Settled," said Joe. He took his rifle and went around into Henniker Canyon after his horse and to arrange with Jack Randal.

Preparations for an immediate start were then made.

The body of Bill Norton was tied to his horse and a blanket thrown over it, for all were agreed that the poor fellow should not find his grave there in the wilderness.

Joe assisted in every way he could, and soon the start was made.

Meanwhile not a sound had been heard to indicate the presence of the enemy.

Joe and Jack Randal stood by the dying fire, listening to the footfalls of the retreating horses for several minutes before either spoke.

"This is a bad business, young feller," remarked Randal at last.

"Bad enough," said Joe. "Now listen to me, for I've been figuring this thing out in my own way. What we want is to get on the trail of these fellows."

"Sure Mike, but I'm blamed if I see how anything can be done before morning."

"I look at it differently. I think a lot can be done. Attention, please. Let us slide around into Henniker's Canyon and wait. Someone will be back here, sure, to see if all hands have gone on or whether the gold has been left behind."

"What put that idea into your head?" demanded Randal, as he followed Joe around into the other canyon.

"Don't know, but it's there."

"Blamed if I don't think you are right, unless—"

"Unless someone is close at hand watching, you mean to say."

"That's what I am thinking of."

"In that case, as soon as we disappear, the watcher is bound to show himself, for he will be trying to locate us."

Jack Randal, who was naturally a dull proposition, was greatly impressed by Joe's positive way

of putting it, and he was, therefore, not one bit surprised when, after a few minutes, stealthy footsteps were heard around in Long Canyon by the fire.

"Slide in here behind these rocks!" breathed Joe. "The spy has come, and we want to catch him if we can. He'll be after the horses, sure."

Hidden from observation behind a great pile of broken rock which had fallen from the heights above, they waited in breathless suspense.

It was but a minute before they knew that they only had one man to deal with, although Joe had suspected it from the first. He came sneaking around into Henniker Canyon, rifle in hand, and for a moment stood still, looking toward the horses, ready for a run in case of attack.

"Keep dark," breathed Joe. "He'll come to the horses. He thinks they have been abandoned, I suppose."

After a minute or two the man moved forward and walked on to where the horses were hobbled.

Now Joe was able to get a look at him, as the moon had risen and was shining down into the canyon.

It was Hank Horner!

The very sight of the treacherous fellow was enough to make Joe's blood boil.

"Now, Jack!" he whispered, and they sprang out from their concealment, covering Horner with their rifles.

"Hands up!" shouted Joe. "Instanter or you are a dead one!"

Hank broke out with a startled exclamation and threw his hands up over his head.

"Don't shoot! Don't kill me!" he cried. "I come as a friend."

"Friend nothing," retorted Joe. "Where is Tim Graniss? Speak!"

"That's just what I am trying to find out," stammered Hank. "Isn't he here? Has he gone away with the rest of them fellers?"

Joe leveled his rifle at the fellow's head.

"Where's Tom Graniss, Hank Horner?" he said, sternly. "Answer or you die!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT HAPPENED TO TOM.

It was not the shots which awakened Tom.

The first he knew someone seized him by the throat in his sleep, and a handkerchief was jammed into his mouth.

The pressure on his throat was terrible. Tom struggled and tried to call out, but it was all in vain.

Two men held him captive; a third was engaged in tying his hands behind him.

"Hold him tight! Hold him tight!" one whispered. "Remember Bill's orders—there must be no miss in the case."

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

WHISKY SOWED IN PATCH.

With M. S. Baughn, law agent in charge of the liquor raiding operations in that county, standing guard with a loaded gun, Deputy Daly ploughed up 120 pints of whisky in a sweet potato patch four miles from Girard, Ala. Some of the corks of the bottles were found blown out, believed to have been due to the effects of the extremely hot weather recently. How long this whisky had been buried is not known.

CORN KERNELS AN INCH BROAD.

In the middle farming zone of Peru, at an elevation between 8,000 and 11,000 feet, the Cuzco type of corn is the principal crop. It is characterized by very large kernels, sometimes nearly an inch broad. Cuzco is a native of the cool table-lands of Peru rather than the tropical valleys. This fact throws new light on its behavior in the United States. In the hot summer climate of the Eastern States it usually fails to set seed, but it may be of use on the Pacific Coast or other parts of the United States, where there is too little heat for our varieties to mature.

SHADOW GOWNS BARRED.

Alton, Ill., women and girls who possess shadow gowns will do well not to interpose themselves between the sun and Mayor Beall or Alton's policemen.

Mayor Beall has come out against the diaphanous gown, a la "see more." It must go—go home and get more clothes. The penalty for wearing shadow gowns is arrest.

In an interview in support of his position, the Mayor went back into history. Not as far back as the Garden of Eden, but to Arabia, with its fair women and torrid clime. Whoever heard of an Arabian woman who was not clothed with a thickness or two of opaque muslin? asks the Mayor.

Mayor Beall's order placing the shadow gown under the ban followed a shock he received on the street the other day. A woman wearing a shadow gown passed him. He stopped the wearer and told her to go home for more clothes. The order to the police followed.

SPARROW'S HABITS.

Observations of the habits of the English sparrow made by the biological survey show how living things adapt themselves to many varying conditions so as to make the most of their surroundings and then become the victims of other changes that do not at first sight seem to concern them at all. The birds brought to the Atlantic coast of this country several generations ago spread rapidly all over the

land, but stuck tenaciously to the cities. The spreading flocks did not stop at international boundaries, but have been traced by the survey observers both into Canada and Mexico, relates a writer in the *Indiana Farmer*. The cold of the former country brought about almost a complete change of habits. The emigrants to Canada have become more thrifty, build much warmer nests than their cousins south of the international line, and have even taken to building in hollow trees, a practice not common among the sparrows either in Central and Southern States or in England. The sparrows that have gone into Mexico, on the other hand, have taken to building light nests, and lead a distinctly sub-tropical existence.

SMALL SALARIES IN JAPAN.

Dr. Takata, Minister of Education, has recently published a popular book on dietetics, explaining the food values—proteins, hydro-carbons, etc.—in various articles of general consumption, showing where and how the highest nutrition may be obtained at the lowest cost. Food and clothing are cheap in Tokio and rents relatively high. In view of the low native salaries, says the *East and West News*, the necessity for the greatest economy in expenditure is visible, and the pinch comes hardest in the middle rather than poorer classes, for the former must not only live, but often keep up a respectable appearance on salaries no greater than the men who work at trades.

A primary school teacher earns \$15.50 a month, but his lowest budget for four in family reaches \$17.32, and his wife must work at home to earn the deficit. He will quit smoking, he says pathetically, when the new third baby comes. A magazine editor and writer who has a wife, two children and a maid spends \$32.75 monthly on rent, food, light, heat, wages and sundries, including theatre-going, but excluding clothes. His earnings are irregular, but always below his expenses. Happily he has been able in three years to borrow \$125 from his wife's relations. His wife's trousseau is not unknown to the pawnshop.

An official whose family consists of three adults and four children earns \$37.50, and his mere living expenses just meet that amount. In ten years he has borrowed \$300 from his wife's family, presumably for clothes. A doctor with a wife, four children, an assistant and three servants has an outgo of some \$120. He earns \$95, but owns his house. He has private means and must be quite a swell among doctors, for the learned author states that two-thirds of the Tokio doctors earn no more than \$50 a month. Truly, the learned profession in Japan have their heroes!

MR. WALL OF WALL STREET

OR

The Man Who Came from the Klondike

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER V (continued).

"I don't doubt that the papers are in the safe, and like enough the biggest part of the money is there, too."

"Let us hope so, boy. Where does Mr. Wall live?"

"I don't know."

"What! Don't know where your boss lives?"

"This is a large city, Mr. Silver. I know where Mr. Wall did live, but he has left his hotel some weeks ago now, and I don't know where he went to."

"It must be over there at the other end of that ferry."

"It may be, but I doubt it. The neighborhood over there isn't at all the kind of place he would choose to live in."

"Then he is just wandering about daffy. you think?"

"That's my idea of it. If we go over there we may find some trace of him. He can hardly go far as he was without being arrested. He's an old man, and his strength is liable to give out in this storm."

"Then we'll trail him!" cried the Klondiker. "I never missed on the trail yet. Wall was my father's old friend, and if it is with him as you think, he must be found and saved for his own sake and for my sake, too."

"You are sure you saw him go aboard that boat?"

"Oh, yes. I seen him go through the gate at the ferry, and I seen him standing on the back end of the boat when it pulled out."

"That settles it; but I think we had better go now; it is most time for the next boat."

Fred's white elephant was as meek as a lamb now, and he continued so during their trip over on the 39th street ferry.

He questioned Fred closely about Mr. Wall's history, going into every detail and covering the same ground again and again.

"He must be found," he wound up by saying when at last they ran into the South Brooklyn slip. "I'll trail him if I have to keep on going to the end of the earth."

"You had better leave it to me to do the talking now," said Fred. "Up in the Klondike you would know more than I do, but here in New York it's different, and—"

"And you know more than me. Is that it?"

"That's about the size of it."

"Well, boy, I believe you are right. Bust ahead and see what you can do."

And Fred did wonders, but after all it was not so strange, for Mr. Wall must have cut a peculiar figure that snowy night.

"What's dat?" said the policeman outside the ferry gate on the Brooklyn side. "Old geezer with violets in his button-hole? Yes, I seen him. Looked to me like a blamed old masher. He don't want to come handing around here."

"He's my employer," said Fred. "The man is insane, officer. Which way did he go?"

"Up thirty-nint," replied the policeman. "I tink he was drunk. He staggered a bit. I orter pulled him in."

They hurried on to Third avenue.

Here, in spite of the storm, several young men stood outside the corner saloon talking their endless talk, after the style of Brooklyn corner loafers.

Fred tackled them and got a second tip.

"Pp tirty nint," was the word again.

The boys had all seen Mr. Wall. They looked at the Klondiker admiringly, and seemed very willing to tell what they knew.

At Fourth avenue the cry was still the same.

"Up thirty-nint."

It was a man who came down "thirty-nint" who said it; seeing no one else, Fred tackled him.

"I saw that old man sitting on a stone there by the lots," he said. "He seemed to be winded by the hill, and dazed-like. I stopped and asked him if he was sick, and where he was going. Upon my word, it made me laugh what he said."

"What was it?" demanded Jack Silver.

"Why, he says to me: 'How can I be sick when I've just come from the Klondike? Up there everybody is young. I'm going back to the Klondike to work my claims.'"

"And he said that!" cried Silver. "Heavens, Fred, he thinks he's me."

"That's evidently it," replied Fred.

"Bughouse?" asked the man.

"What do you mean by bughouse?" demanded the Klondiker, fiercely.

"He means crazy, Mr. Silver," interposed Fred. "Yes, sir. The old man is mad. Which way did he go?"

Then came the usual answer:

"Up thirty-ninth."

They rushed on through the snow till they came to Fifth avenue.

"Say, look at the canyon, will you?" cried Silver, gazing with astonishment at the big cut through the hills here. "I never supposed you kept canyons right here in New York city, blamed if I did!"

"We keep them in Brooklyn," laughed Fred, "and that's where we are now. But come, we must keep on the trail."

"There's a railroad running through there, I see," said Silver. "Reminds me of the trolley line we've got up the Chilkoot Pass."

Again Fred was lucky enough to strike a policeman, a very intelligent young fellow.

"Why, yes. I saw that man here not five minutes ago," said the policeman. "He came up to me, and, pointing up the big cut there, asked me if that was the way to the Klondike. I thought he was drunk. I ought to have arrested him, I suppose, but I told him to take a Fifth avenue car, thinking that by the time he got to the Bridge he would have slept off enough of his load to make him able to go home."

"He's mad, I'm afraid," said Fred.

"Is that so?" replied the policeman, looking troubled. "I certainly ought to have pulled him in. If you won't report me I'll give you a steer."

"I won't report you, officer," said Fred earnestly. "I've got business enough of my own on hand to-night without interfering with yours."

"Well, then, he didn't take the car. He struck off into the lots there up over the hill. If you don't find him come back and look me up, and I'll see what can be done."

"By thunder, Fred, we are on the trail now for fair!" cried Silver, as they descended into the long stretch of vacant lots lying between the big cut and Greenwood Cemetery, and struck off up the hill.

"It looks so, Mr. Silver."

"I wish you'd call me Jack, boy."

"I'll try later. I'm worried now."

"Worried! Think of me!"

"Your case is the worst."

"I should say so. How light it is here!"

"That comes from the electric lights in the big cut."

"My canyon?"

"Yes."

"Queer place to strike right in the middle of a city. What's that bit of timber over there on the left? Why don't they cut them trees down and build houses thar?"

"Why, that's Greenwood Cemetery," cried Fred.

"Sho! A burying ground. You don't say!"

"Yes."

"It's a mighty big one, then."

"This is a big city, and people are dying every day."

"As I might have done to-night if you had been tough enough to follow old man Wall's steer. I feel lost here."

Fred made no reply, and they pushed on through

the snow up the hill, continuing on to the very edge of the big cut.

They came upon it suddenly. Even Fred, growing confused in that lonely spot, did not realize that they were so near, and the Klondiker almost stepped over the edge.

"Look out!" shouted Fred, seizing the bear-skin coat.

"Blast it, boy!" bellowed Silver, grabbing Fred by the throat all in an instant. "I see it all now! You have lured me here to do me up! You tried to push me over thar! Take your own dose, you dirty dog!"

He had been shaking poor Fred as he exclaimed this, and now he gave him a violent push.

Over the bank the boy went whirling, uttering one wild cry as he fell.

It is two hundred feet to the bottom of the big cut at this point.

Poor Fred!

"That settles him!" panted the Klondiker, as he peered down at the falling boy. "He's learned that it don't pay to muss with me!"

CHAPTER VI.

DICK DITCHETT.

That awful fall!

Perhaps the snow covering the stones helped to break it some; at all events Fred reached the bottom of the big cut alive, and was able to rise to his feet.

Then came a second fall.

Fred had stepped off the narrow retaining wall at the bottom of the cut, and down he went some ten feet further.

This time he struck his head.

Rising up again, with his face bathed in blood, and his mind in a state of horrible confusion, he staggered forward toward the light.

Then once more trouble came to the boy.

There was a rush, a roar, a booming gong, and something struck poor Fred.

This was the limit.

A Bath Beach trolley car whirling up the big cut had done the business for Fred Morgan now.

After that all was oblivion, and it might well have been death.

But it wasn't--strange to say it wasn't.

No one person in a thousand could have repeated Fred's experience and survived it.

Fred survived, though, and some hours later came to his senses in bed in the Norwegian hospital in South Brooklyn.

His head was all tied up, his arm was bandaged; he ached from head to foot.

"Broken arm and broken head," the nurse told him, and later the doctor said that it would be a month before he got out again.

(To be continued.)

TIMELY TOPICS

As the result of a cow switching her tail Gottlieb Rueh, a farmer living near Tyndall, S. C., will lose one of his eyes. The tail of the cow struck him square on the eyeball, injuring it to such an extent that he now has gone to a hospital to have the eye removed. This was the only way in which the uninjured eye could be saved, as it has been affected by the injury to the other.

A hospital train of ten Pullman cars, designed by the Army Medical Department, has been ordered from the Pullman shops at Chicago. Five of the cars are to be equipped with regular hospital beds and have large side doors for loading and unloading stretchers, two will be of the regulation sleeper type, equipped with extra fans, medical cabinets and ice tanks, one will carry a complete operating room, and another a kitchen large enough to care for over 200 sick. In addition to the Regular Army personnel, the train will carry a special corps of Army nurses to serve in the wards and operating car. The train will be painted maroon, with the insignia of the Army Medical Department.

Frank King, who carries the mail from Havilandsville to Falmouth, Ky., and return, has been working for the United States forty years. He commenced carrying the mail on July 4, 1876, from Havilandsville to Robinson Station twice a week and continued for four years, and the next four years he made three trips a week, and the next fourteen years and a half he carried it daily. In 1898 he began carrying the mail from Havilandsville to Falmouth and return, daily, traveling twenty-six miles. In his forty years carrying the mail he has traveled 281,000 miles, which equals over thirteen times around the world. He is carrying now love letters for the grandchildren of the men and women that were boys and girls when he first began.

Mrs. Rose Leonard, a widow living in Glendale, Queens, N. Y., was to have been married to Charles Kollfelder, of Woodhaven. When he did not appear at her home for the ceremony, she became uneasy and set out for Woodhaven. She found Kollfelder's home crowded with excited people. A strange hush fell over the house as she entered. "Where is Charles?" she demanded. His sister-in-law answered: "He's here, but you can't see him just now," she told the bride-to-be. Then Mrs. Leonard's glance wandered through a window. Beneath a shady arbor in the back yard was a group of neighbors about a form that lay motionless on the ground. Kollfelder had hanged himself in a rope swing. His body had been discovered only a short time before the hour set for his marriage.

The new battleship Pennsylvania, recently commissioned, left the Norfolk Navy Yard July 20, under command of Capt. Henry B. Wilson, to join the Atlantic Fleet. She has a displacement of 31,000 tons, and with her 14-inch guns the Pennsylvania is the most powerful fighting ship in the U. S. Navy to-day. Secretary Daniels in an official statement points out that the Pennsylvania upon joining the fleet will find twenty-nine battleships cruising on active duty. It is the Secretary's announced policy to keep the ships out at sea as much as possible, instead of leaving them inactive at the navy yards. The new battleship Oklahoma, recently completed, is being fitted out for first commission, and is due to leave the New York Navy Yard on Aug. 5 to join the Atlantic Fleet.

Some of the ships in the U. S. Navy are to be stripped of their outfits of cut glass table service, according to a recent order sent to vessels at the League Island Navy Yard. These ships, so runs the newspaper despatches, have been ordered to send their cut glassware, with the exception of olive dishes and hand mirrors, to the New York Navy Yard, where they are to be sold at public auction. Even the "pickle" dishes had to go, as the name was too suggestive. Two years ago Secretary Daniels issued the famous order that banished liquor from the officers' mess. Now the glasses have gone. Some of the ware has already been sold at auction for twenty per cent of its value. Because of the sentiment attached to it, it could have been sold as souvenirs for twice its original value. The cut glass was the best the Government could buy for its officers. Each piece, from the decanters to the small glasses, bore the crest of the Navy.

The huge demand the war has made on Germany's supply of copper has resulted in a disconcerting situation for German electrical companies, and it is doubtful if even at the present moment they have succeeded in overcoming the shortage of copper by the use of suitable substitutes. Copper is essential to all electrical work. While zinc is being largely employed in Germany as a conductor of electric currents, this metal is far from being satisfactory in this connection. Zinc cables cost from 100 to 150 per cent more than cables of copper when of the same cross-section; but since the conductivity of zinc is considerably less than of copper, and even lower than that of aluminum, the cost of zinc cables and bus bars over copper is far greater than the foregoing figures would indicate. Zinc is being used in preference to iron, for the latter metal is always a material of last resort, particularly when alternating currents are to be handled.

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Good Current News Articles

A steel trap that caught a big rat with a taste for candy freed an innocent man who might otherwise be serving a jail sentence. A clerk in a local confectionery store was held in jail at Nampa, Idaho, several days accused of the theft of the candy which disappeared mysteriously night after night.

The Germans have made use of a Belgian machine for digging canals as a trench digger. In one minute it excavates a cubic meter of ditch. In favorable ground it can advance over 100 yards in an hour, which is equal to the work of 200 men with pick and shovel. It can be employed only well to the rear of the firing line.

Robert H. McC. Potter, retired wall paper manufacturer, of Newton, N. J., who was at one time interested in horse racing, was bitten in the shoulder by his stallion Popinjay. Mr. Potter was petting another horse, Knight of the Thistle, in the stall next to Popinjay. Popinjay became jealous, and when Potter went to pet him the stallion bit him.

Judge Benjamin F. Bledsoe, of the United States Court, San Francisco, awarded to the United States government title to 160 acres of Kern County oil land, valued at \$10,000,000 and known as the McCutcheon section, in the government's ouster suit, brought under the Taft withdrawal order of 1909. The suit was against G. W. McCutcheon, the Standard Oil Company, the Union Oil Company, the General Petroleum Company and other title-claiming interests, being one of many brought by the government to recover California oil lands valued at several hundred millions of dollars.

College House, the old Harvard dormitory in Harvard Square, has been sold by the university to Loren D. Howe, a Boston real estate operator. A modern building, with stores and a hotel, will

take its place. College House was built by the university in 1832. It has proved a boon to many a poor student working his way through college because of its low prices. The stigma of rooming there, however, has become so great in recent years that few rooms were let. This is the first time in Harvard's history that it has sold any property. The university is planning now to buy a privately-owned, well-fitted dormitories on the "Gold Coast." Arrangements already have been made for the purchase of Randolph Hall.

Grins and Chuckles

Friend—So your detective force is a failure? Chief Emma—Yes; we can't find any one who is willing to be a plainclothes woman.

Blinkers—Hello, Winkers. I hear you married a woman with an independent fortune. Winkers (sadly)—No; I married a fortune with an independent woman.

He had just bought a paper in which this headline loomed large: "Woman Shoots at Waldorf." "H'm," he mused, absently. "I wonder if she hit it."

"Now, young man, since you are going into the diplomatic service, let me advise you: If you know nothing, don't tell—and if you know something, keep your mouth shut or you will make a blunder."

Mrs. Gadd—Did you ever! Mrs. Newed has had her bridal slippers silver-plated. Mrs. Gabb—Land sakes! I'm glad there wasn't any such silly fashion when I was married. Little Johnny (moving uneasily)—So'm I!

"I notice," said the new guest, "that everybody calls that hallboy of yours 'Buttons.'" "Yes," replied the hotel proprietor. "He is so called because it is his duty to gather up from the dining-room floor after each meal the numerous buttons the gentlemen burst from their vests."

A seedy-looking man entered a store in Trenton the other day, and asked for assistance, backing up his request with a long tale of sickness and lack of employment. With a wink at his clerk, the merchant pointed to a friend who happened to be in the place, and replied: "Ask that gentleman. He is the proprietor. I am only a clerk." The friend received the beggar's request in a sympathetic manner, and, turning to the merchant, remarked: "This seems to be a worthy case, Mr. Jones. Give him a dollar from the cash register." and walked out of the store. It was in vain that the merchant protested that it had been a joke. So insistent did the seedy one become that "de boss" directions should be carried out that it was finally necessary to do so in order to be rid of him.

THE POST-BOY'S LUCK.

By Alexander Armstrong.

The mail for the little hamlet of Clarksville, so called in honor of one of the oldest and most wealthy inhabitants, Judge Clark, was daily brought from the railroad station known as Braxton, some eight miles distant.

The post-boy left Braxton every evening at six o'clock, after the arrival of the last city mail.

It was not a particularly profitable position, still, Charlie Williams thankfully accepted it, and three hundred dollars a year it brought in, when Judge Clark, as a vacancy occurred, had him appointed to fill the position.

Charlie Williams was the son of a poor widow, who had been left with a large family to support, and so, although she much disliked Charlie's taking the position, for a previous rider had been murdered for the sake of some money which the undetected murderers must have known was in the mail bag, she gave her consent, for three hundred dollars a year would go a great way in her economizing hands, and she knew that her son could not expect to make that much at any other occupation to be found in the neighborhood.

The shadows of a night early in the fall had begun mantling the earth, when Charlie entered the Braxton office for the mail bag.

"Is my mail ready?" Charlie asked the postmaster.

"Yes," replied that individual, picking up a brown leather bag and handing it to Charlie. "And, my boy, you must be very careful of that bag, for it contains a great amount of bonds and money for Judge Clark."

"All right," responded Charlie. "I'm always careful."

"Yes—I know; but to-night you must be particularly careful."

"I'll be so. Anything else to go?"

"No—Charlie, have you your revolver with you?"

"Yes."

"And handy?"

"Yes."

"Well, all right. I only asked because it's going to be a dark, lonesome night, just such a one as highwaymen would select to rob you should they know what the bag contains, and you have a deserted, lonely road to traverse."

"There'll be no danger, I guess. Good-night."

"Good-night," replied the postmaster, and stepping outside Charlie hooked the bag on the pommel on his saddle, vaulted on his horse's back and started on his long ride home.

Night had already fallen and, as the postmaster had said, it would be a dark one, for there was no moon at all, and dark, heavy clouds, portending a storm, were hanging low.

Charlie had frequently ridden post with large

sums in his possession without a thought of fear, but to-night whether induced by the postmaster's words or by some occult reason in the shape of presentiment, he seemed to feel that an impending danger was hanging over him and when he struck a woods, through which two miles of his route lay, he instinctively placed his revolver in a position which would enable him to get it at an instant's warning; while the valuable mail bag he fixed more safely in its position, and then clasped his hands on top of the pommel.

Inside the woods it was as dark as Erebus.

He touched his horse's flanks with his heels, and urged him onward.

In about the center of the woods was a narrow ravine, through which flowed a good-sized brook.

This was the most lonely part of the whole route. There was not a house within two miles on either side, and even on a clear moonlight night the overhanging trees made it a place of almost Egyptian darkness.

As he neared this spot he took the mail bag in his hand, while his right loosely held the bridle, Charlie allowing the staid old horse to follow his own road.

Down the declivity rattled the nag, his feet struck the narrow bridge, and then up the acclivity on the opposite side.

Charlie had begun to breathe easier, and they had almost reached the top, when the sharp crack of a revolver rang out, the faithful old horse gave out what was nearly a human groan of anguish and pain, stumbled, fell violently and quickly to his knees, the mail bag was wrested from his hand as he sought to save himself, and Charlie went flying over the horse's head, and landed forcibly against a huge rock beside the road.

Consciousness, for the time, deserted him.

"A good shot, Bill," said a gruff voice, as two men rose up from beside the road and approached the spot where the old horse was floundering about, bellowing with pain.

"Aye, it was," returned his companion, in an equally gruff tone. "Turn on the light, and let's see how matters stand. Wonder where that boy is."

"He's all right," and the speaker pulled the slide of a bullseye lamp, and directed its rays in the middle of the road.

There lay the horse, and beside him the coveted mail bag.

"There's the bag, Bill; take hold of it, and I'll put the horse out of his misery."

Whatever else they were—caring little for the sufferings of a human being—they could appreciate the sufferings of a horse, and a shot from the revolver he held in his hand proved the quietus of the animal.

Bill by this time had secured the mail bag.

"And now let's see where the rider is," said he who had been called Bill.

The light was flashed about until Charlie was discovered.

"He won't know nothing for a while."

"I'm thinkin' he'll have a black eye. Look at that bruise."

"Yes, and a scar on his cheek that'll last him for life; guess he won't forget this night in a hurry."

"Guess not—ha! ha! ha!" and laughing in glee-
ful chorus the brutal rustians "doused the glim" and trudged back towards Braxton, intending, as their conversation showed, to take the earliest train away from the place.

Charlie had remained unconscious but a few minutes, and had seen the first flash of the light as it had fallen upon his faithful horse.

He felt for his pistol—it was gone.

He had kept it too handy, and in his flight over his horse's head had lost it.

He shut his eyes just as they turned the dark-lantern on him, and by a supreme effort managed to retain the appearance of unconsciousness as they gazed at him.

When they had departed, he arose and commenced crawling about on hands and knees in search of his revolver.

At last his search was rewarded.

He knew that they must be by this time a mile or more ahead of him.

About a half-mile outside the woods a road crossed the Braxton road.

The robbers had passed this when they heard the clatter of approaching horses' feet.

They lay down beside the road and the horseman passed without discovering them.

They were in a quandary. Should the men pursue the straight road the chances were that they would discover the mail rider and the dead horse, and being on horseback they could easily intercept them at Braxton.

If they pursued the cross road the robbers were safe.

In this predicament they determined to cut across country to a station several miles below Braxton, and to do so they had to return to the cross road and pursue that.

The horsemen had taken the cross road, but of this the robbers were not sure.

They were hardly off the main road when Bill, who was carrying the bag, growled about its weight, and proposed cutting it open and ransacking it then and there.

After some argument they sat down on a pile of stones, taken from a field under cultivation; the light was directed on the bag—it was cut and the contents emptied at their feet.

Evidently well aware of the contents, they pulled the mail matter over until with a delighted cry Bill held up a large sealed envelope, addressed to Judge Clark.

"I've got it!" he cried.

"Good! Now we'll be off."

Charlie meanwhile had hastened on toward Braxton.

As he neared the cross road he heard the tramp-

ing of feet, and finally saw the two men turn into it.

The fact of their coming from the direction of Braxton puzzled him, but a conviction that they were the robbers flashed itself upon his mind, and he followed them.

His heart beat high when he saw them climb over the fence, and his convictions were affirmed, when, crawling cautiously forward until he occupied a position on the opposite side of the stone pile, he heard their conversation, and saw the reflection of the light.

As the words—"now we'll be off"—were muttered he sprang to his feet and cried:

"Never—while you retain that letter of Judge Clark's."

"The rider," said both in amazement, and they flashed the light upon him.

Crack! crack! went the revolvers of the robbers, but Charlie had dropped to the ground and the bullets whistled harmlessly over his head.

"Guess that fixed him," growled Bill. "Come on now, this place'll be too hot to hold us in a little while."

They turned to go, but they counted without their host, for two sharp reports rang out in rapid succession and both fell, one with a broken leg, and the other wounded mortally.

Charlie darted across and seized the dark-lantern, turned the slide and placed it on the stone heap so that its rays exposed the robbers, and then sunk back in the darkness.

"Surrender," cried Charlie.

"We will," said one of them, gloomily.

"Throw your revolvers over by the stones," commanded the boy.

They did so.

Taking off his suspenders, Charlie tied Bill's hands behind him.

His companion needed no tying—he was dying.

"I'm done for, Bill," said the fellow.

Several hours later a farmer, who had been to the city and returned by a late train, came along, and to him Charlie related the circumstances of the affair.

A wagon was procured and the robbers were taken to a house some distance away.

Jim Wilson, Bill's companion, before he died, made a confession which involved a postoffice official in New York, he having furnished the information which led to the attacking of Charlie.

Bill Jackson was sent to prison for twenty years.

Of course Judge Clark was highly grateful to Charlie for having captured the robbers and thus saving his bonds, and made the lad a present which placed him far above the necessity of riding post, and which enabled the fearless lad to make a nice home for his mother, and to educate and send forth into the world his brothers and sisters, who, as he himself also did, became shining lights in the circle in which they moved.

FROM ALL POINTS

HOGS BECAME INTOXICATED.

Some of the citizens of Narka, Kan., had the opportunity a few days ago of witnessing a number of intoxicated hogs. V. H. Greuter, the owner, noticing their queer actions and thinking the animals sick, called a local veterinary, who after careful examination pronounced them drunk.

Then the owner began to figure out where they had found the booze in prohibition Kansas, and finally concluded that his swine had become intoxicated from cherry pits dumped into the slop, and these standing in the barrel for several days, had gone through a process of fermentation.

WHITE SHARK CAPTURED.

A white shark, one of the most vicious of the shark family, was caught in Jamaica Bay, N. Y., the other afternoon by William Cring, Jr., of Avenue N, Boardwalk, Canarsie, and Harry Fuller, also of Canarsie. Both men say they know it is a white shark because they have seen them before several times. This fish is 6 feet 6 inches long and weighs about 250 pounds—not large for its species but large enough to kill a man.

The men were fishing for sharks in an eighteen-foot skiff. They hooked this one near Buoy 2, in the channel. Their hook was baited with a weak-fish head. They landed the shark after a 45-minute fight and it was placed on view in front of Cring's home.

GETS \$11,100 FOR A BULL.

Fifteen years ago Jim Price was a farm employee at the Shadeland stock farm near Lafayette, Ind. A few days ago James Price of Onalaska, Wis., sold a Hereford bull at an auction sale in Kansas City for \$11,100, the highest price ever paid for such an animal. Jim Price, the farm-employee, and James Price, the Hereford breeder, are one and the same.

Price saved a few hundred dollars, bought some cheap land in Wisconsin for \$10 an acre and began breeding Hereford cattle. He obtained two fairly good cows and began to build up his stock. His friends here began to hear vague rumors that he was succeeding. But they heard little definite news until they learned he had raised a Hereford bull that had broken the world's record for value.

Price now has one of the finest Hereford herds in the world.

FISH IN RAT TRAP.

How a rat trap—one of the large, old-fashioned, wire-mesh kind with room enough for a dozen rodents—was converted into a fish trap is told by C. H. Maevre, Mayor of Egypt Mills, Mo.

Several days ago, Luke Funk, while doing a house-cleaning stunt at the home of Alvis Ritter, threw away a large rat trap. He tossed it over the fence and forgot about it.

Ritter lives near the Flora Creek. The trap landed on the bank, and recently when the high water struck there the trap was inundated and swept along till it finally landed on the bank in the water.

A few days after the storm that brought the creek up to flood level had passed, the sons of Samuel Young, while playing along the creek, came upon the rat trap. They hauled it out of the water and found it filled with fish. They were large catfish, and there were so many in the trap that they scarcely had room to wriggle around.

They were caught like rats in a trap. The boys took the idea in hand and began baiting the trap. The cage works just as well for fish as for rats, for they have been making big hauls regularly ever since their discovery of the innovation.

INDIANS HAVE DYES.

Manufacturers all over the country are complaining of the shortage of dyes; clothing makers are threatening to dress us in garments white as snow; the time is coming, say the ink manufacturers, when we must rely on the red fluid made famous by Capt. Kidd and other pirate bands when we want to write a check, but Chem, better known as Steve, an Indian and a manufacturer of British Columbia, worries not.

He makes his own dyes, and whether any more are ever imported from Germany, or whether American chemists solve the secrets, are alike matters of supreme indifference to him. So long as his klutchman and his tenas, or, in English, his wife and daughter, retain their strength, he will pose as a manufacturer and turn out the same mat and basket goods, having the same bright colors as the utensils his forefathers used as berry containers and cooking vessels when the foot of the white man was foreign to these shores.

All the specimens of the handiwork of the women shine forth in gay colors, and all colors are obtained by the klutchmen, according to the simple process known for thousands of years.

The black, and it is a black that will not fade, is obtained by covering the rushes, grasses or bark with the black mud of the swamps, which gives a lasting jet equal to any imported dye; the red is obtained from the bark of the alder, pink from a weaker solution of the same bark; brown comes from the familiar bark of the hemlock and yellow is boiled out of the root of the Oregon grape.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

KILLS FRIEND WHILE TESTING HIS NERVES.

John Anderson, a fighter in many preliminary bouts, and his friend Thomas Walsh were discussing a pail of beer and the virtue of courage the other day in Anderson's home, at 80 Palmetto Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

"I got no nerves," declared Anderson. "You could take and cut my arm off and I wouldn't flinch. You could stick a knife into me and I'd just watch you."

Walsh snatched up a table knife and lunged at Anderson's chest. The fighter threw himself forward to meet the thrust. The next instant he fell back unconscious. The knife had slipped between two ribs and penetrated close to the heart. Two hours later he died in the German Hospital.

Walsh was locked up in the Hamburg Avenue police station charged with homicide.

RELAY RACE FROM NEW YORK TO SAN FRANCISCO.

A relay race in which forty-seven stock cars of the same company took part crossed the continent in six days eighteen hours and ten minutes, according to a telegram received from San Francisco by the Saxon Motor Company yesterday. The first of the company's cars left New York last Saturday and the last one reached San Francisco at 4.40 o'clock yesterday morning. The route was over the Lincoln Highway. A message from Mayor Mitchel to Mayor Rolf of San Francisco was carried. The relay race was planned by the company, it was announced, to determine what time could be made by motor cars in bearing long-distance messages. The mileage of the Lincoln Highway is 3,331 miles, but the distance actually traversed, a telegram from the company says, was considerably in excess of this owing to the necessity of making detours, and that the average speed of the cars was probably not less than twenty-five miles an hour.

SARAH BERNHARDT COMING.

Sarah Bernhardt has announced her intention of making the visit to America which the illness that followed the amputation of her leg prevented her from making last season. W. F. Connor, her American manager, received the following cablegram from Mme. Bernhardt:

"Sailing from Liverpool end of September after an engagement in London, where I will present a very novel piece in English and French."

Before she had recovered from the shock of the amputation last year Mme. Bernhardt made ar-

rangements to come to America early in the fall. The trip was postponed several times till finally the actress became convinced that the undertaking was impossible. She appeared in France several times, however, and then went to London, where she played four months, mostly in sketches in which she had to do little moving about. Upon her return to France she gave six performances at the trenches for the soldiers.

Mme. Bernhardt will be 72 years old when she makes her ninth visit to this country. Her engagement in New York will be at the Knickerbocker Theatre.

VALUABLE FACTS WE ALL SHOULD KNOW.

Breathing.—Breathe through the nose, as this method will warm and moisten and purify the air. Breathing through the mouth will not. Colds (so-called) are contracted by mouth-breathing. The air we breathe must be moistened to prevent "colds." Keep a pan of water on your heating stove and breathe through the nose all the time, indoors and out.

Poison Ivy.—Steep the seeds of cardamon. Apply the lotion cold.

Doctor Nature.—Doctors, medicines and money are failures as cures for the ill person. Correctly eating the right amount of the right food is the only sure way of preventing and curing disease. "Gorging," says Dr. Moras, "is suicide." Diet or die.

Drowning.—Lay the body face downward, face turned to one side so as not to prevent breathing. Extend arms above the head. Kneel astride the buttock, place your hands on the short ribs, and alternately press down with the weight of your shoulders and release, twelve to fifteen times to the minute. Do this for an hour if necessary. When natural breathing is restored, rub legs and body toward the heart to stimulate circulation.

Fish Food for Fat People.—Don't take fat-reducing medicines if you are too stout. Cut down your diet, get out-of-door exercise, and you will assume normal lines and weight. Avoid sweets, eggs, cream, fat meats and especially potatoes.

Fishbone in Throat.—A raw egg swallowed will detach a fishbone in the throat.

To Stop Bleeding.—The worst case of bleeding can be stopped by cold water.

Tobacco.—"Smoking good tobacco is good for the health."—Dr. J. Gardner Smith, New York.

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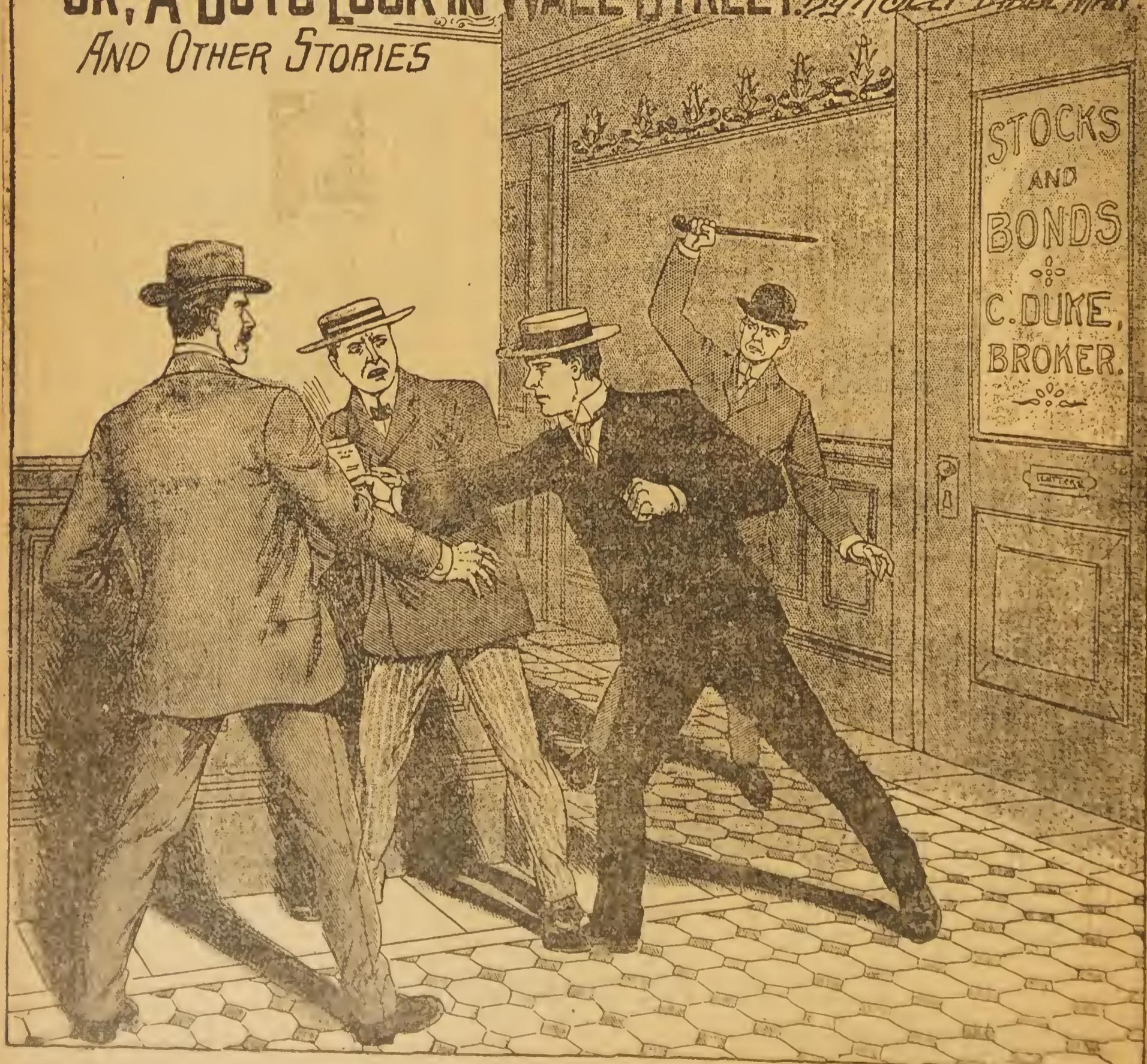
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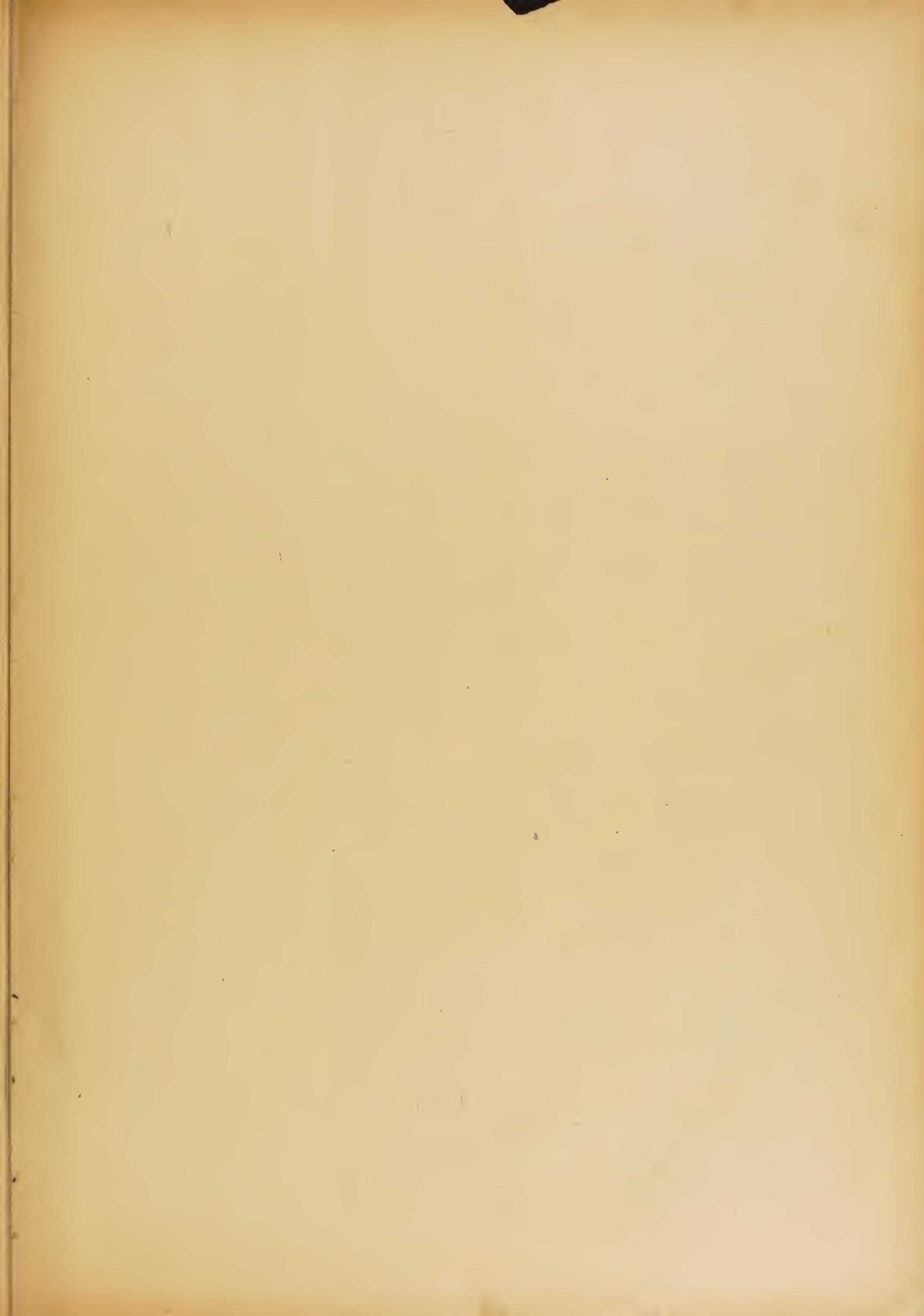
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